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Some Revolutionary Thoughts

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Before I start with the main body of this article, let me state that the kind of analysis this article concerns itself with has little if any bearing on George Lucas' vision of the STAR WARS universe, since he doesn't really seem to consider, or even care, about the implications and possibilities of his story and I don't expect him to. He's just a good filmmaker with a simple story to tell and any such analyses would probably be considered silly by him and, quite frankly, he's probably right. Still, silliness can be fun and there is a wealth of speculation to be done with the saga. So I simply offer the following as one person's random, meandering speculations. With hope, it will interest a few readers.

I am a student of history, politics, economics, law and, especially, revolutions, and I thought it might be interesting to analyze the SW revolt. Most rebellions begin by the protests of a few or several groups, whether new or old, whether violent or non-violent. Most of them start with a strong reformist tendency while a very few--sometimes only one--are openly revolutionary and advocate armed struggle. But even these usually start protesting peacefully, often in loose association with the others. It is during this stage that negotiations are the major protest strategy. Tactics include peaceful demonstrations, petitions, rallies, boycotts, civil disobedience, calls for meetings with government officials, and so on. This was true for the American Revolution as it is for today's El Salvadoran revolution. After fruitless years of peaceful attempts at reforms, in which the government increases its repression and grows even more intransigent than it was initially, the more organized and more militant groups may decide to practice openly revolutionary goals, going underground and taking armed action. They are soon joined by the more reformist organizations whose members are continuously murdered by government forces. It may or may not be an uneasy alliance, since one side of the coalition may still work for negotiations as a secondary strategy while the other side may not. A few groups remain peaceful until almost the

very last minute. Yet they are still sympathetic to their armed counterparts. Only at the last minute, when the rebels are practically at the capitol's doorstep, does the government make a few changes in defense of its continued existence. By then, however, it is far too late, even if these changes are truly systemic ones, which they rarely are.

Some of these points fit in with the Alliance's revolt, some don't. To begin with, armed opposition against the Empire by former Republicans (who seem to form the backbone of the Alliance) seems to have begun right at its inception, if not in its embryonic stages. And these Repub-



licans still command a certain amount of power so that much of the conflict between the Alliance and the Empire can be characterized as a competition between two power interests, one currently eclipsing the other. So, just what and who forms the Alliance? It must be a coalition of forces but, clearly, the most influential faction are the Republican interests. Is part of the old Republic's military apparatus still extant? Probably, and much of the Alliance's military equipment is likely furnished by these Republican interests. Was the Alliance's strategy armed action from the beginning? This is probable since with part of the old military still around and, no doubt, the Empire's violent purges and reprisals, it is more likely that negotiations were never considered viable.

But just exactly who is the Alliance fighting? In the novel STAR WARS, the Emperor Palpatine is described as being a pawn of bureaucrats, greedy officials and "massive organs of commerce." This is, of course, in direct contradiction to the Emperor we see in JEDI, who may or may not be Palpatine. He doesn't seem to be a pawn of anyone, unless of course there is someone even more powerful than he that we haven't seen. I offer that as an "out" to explain the contention in the novel that he is being used by others. I think perhaps the most important element there is the "massive organs of commerce." These are the vast units that control great wealth and the galactic market and are therefore the backbone of the Empire. Who suffers from these "supermonopolies"? Small entrepreneurs, laborers (probably the largest group), whether organized or not, and perhaps some local planetary governments who are impoverished and whose loyalties lie with their dying, squeezed-out industries. Most of these governments can easily be co-opted and controlled, however, by the supermonopolies who pacify their leaders with wealth. (Witness the regimes of the Third World.) Certainly these co-opted governments may at times dislike their alliance with the Empire for purely selfish reasons, but they would never dream of challenging it--for it keeps them in power. Their own oppressed people would boot them out instantly if given the chance. So the only planetary governments who would support the Alliance would be the most enlightened ones with a feeling of patriotism toward their own world's sovereignty.

It is these three groups that would compromise the rest of the Alliance and it is quite probable that this coalition is an uneasy one. Why? Because of the predominance of Republican interests in the Alliance. Why just this as a point of contention? As I said, these Republican interests represent old, moneyed power. The other side of the Alliance does not. It has been mentioned in the novel STAR WARS that there was great discontent throughout the galaxy against the Republic and that Palpatine capitalized on this and promised to end the suffering. It is likely that

perhaps some of these other non-Republican interests within the Alliance initially supported Palpatine, naively believing his promises for change. It is also likely that others within these interests were disaffected from the entire Republic itself and saw Palpatine as just a part of it, correctly realizing he would end nothing and would probably be worse. Therefore, there may be these non-Republicans within the Alliance who struggle alongside with the Republicans only because the latter have the most power to effect the overthrow of the Empire, because they particularly trust these Republicans. They may rationalize to themselves that they will be able to gain independence and true freedom once the Alliance has succeeded. But there may be some who refuse to even associate themselves with the Alliance. After all, the Alliance is just a force of the Old Republic which caused all the trouble in the first place. These elements--probably a few impoverished worlds and laborer groups--may form their own resistance movement. It is not uncommon to have two or more separate rebel forces within a revolution. And the groups in this separate movement, and those who have uneasily chosen the Alliance as their base of struggle, may even be the Republic's old opposition. Planetary governments with stringent regulations about their own economic and planetary sovereignty, now with the Alliance, may have been strongly opposed by the Republic since increasing centralization seems to have been the course it took.

From where did these supermonopolies originate? Probably from a few richer, elite worlds who have the most modern in everything and who pacify their populations with wealth and propaganda. Alderaan was perhaps a moderately wealthy elite world representing the small entrepreneur guilds with its own strong sense of independence within the increasingly concentrated galactic market. The Alderaan interests are probably the most powerful and most prestigious within the Alliance, with perhaps excessive influence. This too may be a factor in the basic disharmony within the grouping of the Alliance, since others may resent the hierarchy and inequality of the power within it.

It is therefore likely that after victory, the Alliance will break up and squabble. The Alderaan and similar interests may want to institute another Republic with few differences in the old system. Its former allies and the other smaller resistance movement may join together in opposition, and the new Republic just may have another rebellion on its hands, this time against itself. These anti-Republic groups have perhaps been struggling for centuries, during the old Republic itself and by this time, they are not about to forget the demands for greater independence and dignity just because the Empire has been overthrown. These groups may see the Empire as the logical extension of the Republic and will want to set up something

altogether different. A Republic that allows supermonopolies and greedy bureaucrats to gain power must have some serious flaws at its base. It probably suffered from lack of enough regulations against concentration of markets, not enough consideration for the more powerless elements and too much hierarchy and bureaucracy. Probably a compromise solution would be a strong representation by each planet in the Senate and stringent regulations about interference and exploitation of world economies. Provisions for cross-planetary laborer, artisan and other guilds with equally strong regulations for their maintenance and power could also be implemented. I resist the notion of a president but prefer a rotating election of 100 or 200 senators to serve for a very limited term and to be extremely subordinate to the galactic population. Some sort of body should be made to monitor it. There are many problems with representative democracy so the less concentration of power in the hands of the Senate, the better. As for the military, that sentiment is doubled. Actually, I prefer greater autonomy and independence for the planets themselves, and for the guilds (excluding the more powerful business ones), even isolation if they choose it. Each world should be made to depend on itself, to prevent any exploitation by a galactic government and its entrepreneurial interests. However, is it realistic to believe that these supermonopolies and their allies will simply disappear? They still control the markets. They will either seek to replace the Emperor immediately (and the Empire's bureaucratic and military apparatus is still there) or will try to co-opt less militant sections of the Alliance and seek a compromise, or both. A debate will probably spark within the Alliance between those who seek to keep their rebellion pure by not associating with those who kept the Empire in power (and by sanctioning them severely, possibly even with violence) and those who will call themselves "practical" by compromising with the supermonopolies and greedy bureaucrats. The latter will be the easier thing to do since dismantling the Empire is not going to be a one-two-three job. These "practical" elements may also consider the lucrative benefits the Republic will accrue through association with the monopolies. Unless the Alliance simply exterminates them--which will mean more years of war against the monopolies and the Imperial military--it may force itself into keeping them around and rationalizing that they can be kept in check. The only real solution is breaking up these monopolies immediately and completely which will, again, require a very bloody war. But that solution in itself will cause many problems, since super-concentration of politics and economics creates an extremely delicate, fragile, interdependent structure. The results would hurt many planets and entrepreneurs who simply may not want to take the risk.

Certainly these consequences would last only temporarily until each world and group learned how to prosper independently but the lessons would be hard and bitter to learn. Then, too, there are those populations of elite worlds who would lose most of their privileges and would certainly put up a fight. It is more likely that the Alliance has a difficult war on its hands still. In its last days, the Empire made no moves to change things even slightly (apparently), so there's no reason to believe its old inflexibility is suddenly gone just because their figurehead is dead.

I haven't mentioned the religious component which, in most revolutions, is an extremely important factor. Today, religion has a very crucial role to play in the rebellions of Latin America (with its liberation theologians), the Middle East (with its anti-West Islamic fundamentalist revival, much of which has been wholly misperceived in this country) and the Catholic Church of Poland and Eastern Europe, whose hierarchy collaborates with the government. It is the same for Asian philosophies such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Hinduism, and so on. In ANH, the Force is referred to as a "religion." It's apparent that the Empire holds no devotion to it. This is probably the single most important divergence between the Republic and the Empire. The Jedi "know the ways of the Force." But are they the only users? And are there Force-worshippers, that is, actual religious sects that perhaps don't use the Force in the way Jedi do? Or is there just one galactic Force religion? And are there other religions that may even deny the Force? Is it possible that there may be some religions that hold the Jedi as gods? Perhaps the Alliance has within it a strong religious group or groups that exert great influence on certain devout populations. It is clear the Empire had no use for religion of any kind and probably attempted to erase the memory of all religion or religions that existed and thrived during the Republic. It is possible that the more powerful religious elements (such as the Jedi) had a great deal to lose if the disaffected populations and groups who supported Palpatine gained prominence and perhaps they encouraged directly or indirectly the suffering that was rampant throughout the galaxy which eventually helped Palpatine gain power. Perhaps the Jedi had become too much associated with the power and abuses of the old Republic so that the Empire's attempts to erase all memory of the Jedi was an easy task when considering the disaffected populations. Perhaps Vader was a trend and not an exception. And maybe the Emperor we saw in ROTJ was further proof of the corruption to be found in the Republic. There may still be some distrust of the Force and the Jedi throughout the galaxy that the new Republic will have to contend with.

One thing to remember always about revolutions: they are never artificially

created. A revolution is a legitimate expression of popular will. It is true that there may be thousands who do not actively participate in the revolt. I'm sure the Alliance does not comprise the majority of disaffected peoples in the galaxy, but it has their sympathy and support. An oppressed and repressed people is controlled through fear so that it takes a great deal of courage to challenge the source of that fear. Powerlessness and submission becomes institutionalized and a part of the popular mind-set so that only a few among many comprise the revolt. Yet they are just as much a part of the many as those who stay home. Still, the Empire certainly must have capitalized on this and spread propaganda characterizing the Alliance as just a bunch of minority malcontents, terrorists and bullies, thereby lulling the galactic population into believing the rebels have no legitimacy. And certainly any sporadic, exceptional instances of Alliance abuse of violence (contradiction of terms, I know) would be paraded through the news as proof of Alliance terror. This was the kind of propaganda spread by Britain and its allies about the

American rebels in the 18th century and it's the same sort of propaganda we hear today about Central America and Middle Eastern revolutionaries. The Alliance will have a difficult time breaking through these planted preconceptions. There is also a good chance that the Alliance's new Republic will have to withstand constant threats and attacks from former Empire forces for years to come which may cause it to take drastic actions, such as curbing certain freedoms. This is the all-too-frequent circumstance in many revolutions.

One final observation concerning Lucas' stated theme of abuse of technology and the evils in it against humanistic values. The former is represented by the atheistic, mechanistic Empire, the latter by the humane, Force-believers of the Alliance. Yet the Emperor is a very strong Force-wielder. There seems to be a "separation" between him and his atheistic military and, presumably, other forces who support him. I point this contradiction out because it may show that the conflict between the Empire and the Alliance may simply be two sides of the same coin.

Now You're Getting Nasty, or Will the Real Obi-Wan Kenobi Please Stand Up? by Marcia Brin

(with all credit to Jean Stevenson, Juanita Salicrup and Melody Corbett*)

Let me begin by saying that this is speculative, an idea and a question that occurred to us while we were discussing the film. What it provides is a new way of looking at certain things that are going on--or being said--in ROTJ, as well as clearing up some problems that taking the film on the surface presents. It's the sort of idea that calls forth one of three reactions: (1) hey, I like that; (2) it's interesting and I'll have to think about it; or (3) did an elephant sit on your brain?!

Well, we can't put it off any longer. The hypothesis reads somewhat as follows: the Emperor, in the guise of Ben Kenobi (both between TESB and ROTJ) and in the Dagobah sequence in ROTJ, has taught Luke the darker aspects of the Force, continues to feed him misinformation and plants further seeds for Luke's destruction by setting up the Leia situation.

OK, OK, let's quit laughing; it's hard to write over all that noise! This is serious business! Actually, the seeds for the idea really started with discussions of some of the questions and problems raised by the film. The most obvious problem is Obi-Wan Kenobi. What happened to good old

Ben? There is something more than a little bit unlikeable about the person we see in this film. I've been a fan of Obi-Wan's since ANH and I've had considerable trouble reconciling my feelings for that character with those toward the one in ROTJ. In addition, quotes from Lucas, in SKYWALKING, as well as in interviews given since the film, indicate that Lucas still considers Obi-Wan to be one of the good guys, the good father figure. Therefore, if that is correct, then something is going on in the Dagobah sequence not at first visible.

There are three possibilities regarding "Obi-Wan's" behavior in that scene. One is the aforementioned hypothesis, and we'll get more into that later. A second is that the figure is Obi-Wan and he is telling Luke the truth. In that case, the question is, why? By that I mean, why tell Luke now? Obi-Wan has guarded this secret for twenty years. Why reveal it at a time when he knows that Luke is going to face at least one, if not both, of the evil presences, and when, in addition, it is obvious that Luke cannot block his thoughts? As Vader said, that would make Obi-Wan's failure complete indeed. Why not wait until you know if Luke will be successful and tell him at that time. If he is not, and Leia is indeed the Other, you can always tell her. Besides, according to Lucas on the PBS special, Luke's belief that Leia was his sister was the reason for "his final turn...to the bad side...". Why provide the enemy with this ammunition?

* You didn't think I was going to stand alone on this, did you?

The last possibility is that it is Obi-Wan--and he is lying to Luke. Again the question is, why? It is easy to understand why Ben lied in ANH: it's hard to tell a boy you've just met that his father--presumed dead--is really one of the most hated thugs in the galaxy. However, this is no longer true. Yoda already told Luke the reason (and perhaps he should not have asked it again of Ben): he had not been ready. All Ben had to do was tell him the same thing, since it was true--from TESB we can see that Luke was not ready for that info. So, why the lie, especially, as noted above, as it carried the seeds of potential destruction for Luke? The only reason I can come up with is that Ben doesn't feel he can trust Luke with the real information on the Other, etc., because Luke still cannot handle it or guard it properly from the bad guys. Along the way, Ben is helping to set Leia up. This is complimentary neither to Luke nor to Ben.

There were other starting points for the hypothesis. One is Luke's total misinformation about Jedi and the Force, as well as some of his actions in the film. Examples of misinformation are spelled out in the novel, but are supported by the film, which, therefore, lends validity to what we are told in the novel. One statement Luke makes in the novel is that Jedi wear black. As he is wearing black in the film, either he is trying to be like the bad guys, or he really believes that Jedi do dress that way. However, we see three Jedi in the Saga--Yoda, Obi-Wan and, at the end of ROTJ, Anakin, who has finally passed his test--and none of them wear black. A second example is Luke's saying that the Jedi's first rule of thumb is to attack. Yet, Yoda told Luke that a Jedi uses the Force for knowledge and defense, never for attack. The novel tells us that Luke believes that Vader saved him over the Death Star--which is probably why Han Solo got a medal for doing it! And why does Luke think he's a Jedi, as he tells Jabba? Whence cometh this (mis)information?

Then there are any number of Luke's actions in the film. His first onscreen gesture is to choke the pig guards; the only other person we have ever seen do this is Vader. His next is to take over someone's mind and force him to do Luke's bidding--a lot of people have criticized Obi-Wan for his action in ANH, yet there he was using the power defensively, putting a shield between Luke and the droids and the stormtroopers; here, Luke is using it offensively, forcing someone to do something that might very well get him killed. He betrays 3PO, treats old friends with contempt, leaves his responsibilities on Endor for his personal quest, etc. Yet, he seems to think he is behaving correctly. This is not the way I would see the person in ANH acting.

If Obi-Wan were Obi-Wan, and telling Luke the truth, then there are also other problems and questions. If Leia is the Other, then the film becomes extremely

sexist. It does not make anyone who has complained of sexism in the Saga happy to give Leia an empty title, because that's what it is as the film stands. In addition, there is the question of why Obi-Wan, who apparently knew about the twins from their birth and had a hand in separating them, forgot about Leia in TESB: "That boy is our last hope." Melody Corbett, in a letter, has already identified this as the "How dumb you get when you're dead" syndrome.

You can also note both physical and attitudinal differences. The Obi-Wan in this film looks considerably less substantial than did the Obi-Wan in TESB (this has been noted by critics, who also complained about his "bad TV reception" image)--almost as if it were a holo projection, rather than the image we had in the earlier film. As to attitudinal changes: one example would be his approach to droids/machines. Ben, in ANH, is a warm man who appears to revere all life, human and non-human, organic and non-organic. In the midst of everything, he thinks to give the Jawas a burial. His behavior toward Artoo is also very kind: he uses terms like "little one", he recognizes the fact that the droid has emotions--including fear for his existence. He does not seem to recognize one form of life as superior over another. Yet, in ROTJ, in response to Luke's statement that there is some good in Vader, he replies with a non sequitor: "He's more machine than man." Not only doesn't this answer Luke's query, but it also suggests that Vader is somehow less, not as good, because he has mechanical parts--which is contrary to his apparent feelings in ANH.

The question now becomes, how does adopting the hypothesis affect the questions and problems raised above? To begin with, it entirely eliminates the sexism and "How dumb ..." problems. Yoda and Ben made no effort to train Leia, because the twin sister is a creation of the Emperor (as the film reads now, it appears that Yoda would have waited ten years for Luke to return rather than teach a female). For that same reason, Obi-Wan's not knowing about the Other makes sense. Yoda tells us (and him) earlier in TESB, "My own counsel will I keep on who is to be trained." The Other of which Yoda spoke now becomes someone Yoda trained and knows of, but who has been kept secret from Ben. In short, a mystery still to be unravelled in the third trilogy.

We can now see the source of Luke's misinformation concerning the Force and the Jedi. Luke did not return to Dagobah, as he had promised (sorry; I do not consider returning for approval after you've gone off by yourself to be keeping the promise made in TESB); yet, at the beginning of ROTJ, he appears to consider himself a Jedi. Why? He must believe himself to be more advanced now than he was at the end of TESB, therefore, some instruction had to have been received. From whom? The

real Obi-Wan told Luke, in TESB, that he could not help Luke if Luke chose to leave. He did not limit that solely to the events on Bespin. Do we know that Obi-Wan was not still prohibited from assisting Luke while he was still AWOL? As well, the content of what Luke seems to have learned during this between-films period certainly does not seem like anything the real Obi-Wan would teach him.

A second possibility is that Luke attempted to train himself. This is a considerably stronger possibility than the first one, but it does not auger particularly well for Luke. Obi-Wan might have been able, during the twenty years on Tatooine, to learn the more esoteric aspects of the Force, but he was a Master when he first came there. He had more than a foundation; he had an entire house built. If, on the other hand, you have left before even the foundation was completed, then you don't know enough to teach yourself. There's an old saying to the effect that if you represent yourself in court, you have a fool for a client. I think the same is true if you try to be your own teacher, and I like to think that Luke realizes this, too.

The last possibility is that the Emperor, pretending to be the "shade" of Obi-Wan, has been instructing Luke. This removes the onus from Luke of having tried to teach himself and of having failed to honor his promise to return to Dagobah: he thought he was receiving instruction from Ben. It also explains the nature of the instruction, which is very Dark Side and which is designed to be used against Luke at a later date. And I don't think that Vader knows what is going on; the Emperor, who no longer appears to have complete faith in Darth, is playing his own game, fashioning his own tool.

This approach also gives us a new perspective on what "Obi-Wan" tells Luke on Dagobah. As noted before, instilling the belief that Leia is Luke's sister sets Luke up for a fall on the Death Star, as per Lucas' words. In addition, the comment about Vader being more machine than man is a very subtle play on an attitude that appears to have been part of Luke's upbringing. Luke was raised on a farm in the middle of nowhere on a backwater planet. Since the climate on Tatooine does not seem conducive to the development of human life, the humans thereon are probably colonists, or the descendants thereof. In short, it has all the virtues and failings of an isolated, rural pioneer community. On the other hand, you will find a great sense of family and community, a willingness to help others in need and sturdy self-reliance. On the other, however, is often a very provincial attitude, a sort of tunnelvision that sees "different" as "lesser" or "inferior" or "wrong". Frontier life also often engenders an "us against them" mentality. We can see that Luke does not deal with aliens in the same manner as someone with a more cosmopolitan

background would. Mark Hamill, in an interview after ANH, discussing Luke's action in shooting the Jawa away from his speeder (so shortly after seeing a whole community of them slaughtered) indicated that it was the way people deal with "those things." I think he's describing the attitude that the average Tatooinian would have and which would have been imparted to Luke while he was growing up. This same attitude seems to extend to droids: in the ANH novel--the only one to bear Lucas' name--Luke leaves a family droid that they have had for twenty years--sort of an old family retainer--behind because he's in a rush to tell his friends about what he saw. And in TESB, he leaves Artoo standing out in the rain.

Therefore, by emphasizing that Vader is "more machine than man", the Emperor makes it easier for Luke to kill him. He is, after all, a set up. Even more, "Obi-Wan" seems to be telling Luke that he has to kill his father. This is not what Yoda said. Yoda merely spoke of "confronting". It avails you nothing to defeat Vader if you have done it all wrong and violated the rules along the way; the ends do not justify the means. The key to Luke's succeeding in becoming a Jedi was to confront Vader as a Jedi: calm, passive, in control of himself and the Force and because it is his duty to face and eliminate the Dark Side where he can. If he can help Anakin along the way, fine, but that cannot be his sole motivation. And if he had to destroy Vader, it should have been with regret but with full knowledge of his duty. Instead, the words and information given to him by "Obi-Wan" on Dagobah were designed to do the opposite, to send him on a personal quest, more concerned with his father than his responsibilities and primed like dynamite to explode. Hardly the actions of a mentor with his best interests at heart.

Some further observations to consider vis-a-vis this hypothesis: notice that the image of "Obi-Wan" does not appear until the light goes out in Yoda's hut, that is, until the Jedi Master is well and truly gone. With the passing of Yoda, the shields that have guarded Dagobah from the Emperor have also gone, leaving Luke totally exposed. The Emperor seems to have enormous power (in fact, an article that I remember reading some time after TESB indicated that he was a Dark Side counterpart to Yoda) and we don't have any reason to assume that, once the protective influence of Yoda has been removed, he could not pick up Luke's location or send a holographic image of Obi-Wan. Note also that the section on the Emperor in THE ART OF ROTJ subtly suggests that he may have some shapeshifting qualities (borne out, perhaps, by the fact that he looks different--and sounds different--in ROTJ from TESB). And, of course, as discussed in greater length before, there is the fact that the "Obi-Wan" who appears on Dagobah seems to be giving different info to Luke than Yoda

Many people have observed that during the first view we have of the Emperor--one or two scenes later--we can see through him, especially around the edges. As well, he is moving slowly and leaning on a cane. Yet, later in the film, we see that he does not need the cane and moves in a strong and vigorous manner. It almost appears as if, when we first see him, he has just expended a great deal of power, which has drained him and made him "fade out" partially (we are, after all, dealing with a "magic" universe).

Further, this approach gives new meaning to lines like, "And your faith in your friends is yours." As it stands, that line redounds badly on Luke, because we see very shortly after that, unlike Lando, who stands fast, sure that Han and the others will destroy the shield, Luke loses faith and goes for his lightsaber. However, what if that is not to what the Emperor is referring? What if he means, instead, that Luke believed the misinformation he was receiving because he thought it was coming from Obi-Wan, and he did not question those statements that must have run counter to Yoda's teaching. Perhaps this is what Lucas meant when he advised "Question authority": if what you are being told is morally wrong, you should question it; if it advises you in a way that would make you ignore your duties,

eye it warily.

Besides, if we take the film on the surface, then we have the rather contradictory spectacle of a thoroughly evil individual playing the game according to Hoyle, that is, fighting fair. He seems to be offering Luke every chance to make his own decisions, merely urging him on verbally (and, in fact, giving Luke the same warnings as Yoda; he just wants Luke to ignore them). If, however, we view it from the point of view that he is acting as the hypothesis suggests, then he becomes a truly Machiavellian and complex figure, capable of great treachery and great craftiness.

The consequences of viewing the film from this angle is that the Emperor takes on added depths, Obi-Wan Kenobi regains the stature he had in ANH and much of the onus has been removed from Luke. He still bears some responsibility for his actions, especially those in TESB which opened him up to the blandishments of the Dark, and perhaps he should have questioned what he was doing more in ROTJ, but he no longer is doing things that he knows are wrong; now he is being misled by the servants of the Dark. It also adds depth and complexity to the story, giving us a twist that can reverberate through future trilogies. And a better look at the workings of the Dark Side.

Return of the Hero's Hero

Jean L. Stevenson

Infinite Diversity in Infinite Combinations (Vulcan precept, STAR TREK)

Consider the seven-foot man of fur and fangs who can be understood by few of the beings he is friendly with, much less those he meets casually. Consider the crustacean-like leaders of a rebellion, the mammoth slug who rules a world, the small Jedi master and the woodfolk who equal him in size and internal strength.

Here is diversity. And fans of the STAR WARS universe have joyfully incorporated these individuals or representatives of them into their own work, developing new and more intricate interactions between creatures. Not only fiction has been the scene of this concern. In a universe first presented in stark blacks and whites, as a teaching tale for the young and learning, it is a subject for continuing discussion. It is the rebel generation speaking to the Me Decade through the medium of fancy, where all can venture. But there is a disturbance here, a darkness, and like much of the best of drama, while the conflict is reflected in all characters, in others it is made most clear.

Consider a metal-made creature with intelligence and feelings, with friends and

enemies of its own kind, albeit of differing shapes and specialities. Consider it a man. Consider him a hero.

See-Threepio. The name is made of numbers and letters, like any other machine. The form, though man-like, is obviously an imitation of man--bipedal with limited maneuverability; visual sensors where eyes should be, eyes that glow in the dark; even a mouth-hole for vocal expression and a metal ridge to suggest breathing passages. He is machine and being at one and the same time, although the two would seem to be irreconcilable in a single character. In fact, much of modern attitudes stress the separation of men and machines and the innate superiority of the former over the latter. But it is that very dichotomy which creates his story, his heroism.

"Curse my metal body! I wasn't fast enough!" (See-Threepio, A NEW HOPE)

First, look at the machine. Threepio has a function and a form to assist him in performing his duties. He is a protocol droid, "human-cyborg relations," fluent in over six million forms of communication, and probably a top model, competent and trustworthy enough to be employed on a

diplomatic--and rebel--ship. (If he knows of the secret mission being undertaken by Princess Leia, he keeps that information to himself from beginning to end.) And the value of his specialty in this universe is evidenced by the number of people who cannot communicate with the machines they employ: Luke's Uncle Owen needs a droid that can speak Bocce; Han Solo requires someone to "talk to the Falcon" although he can himself understand non-English speaking droids. (In addition, droids in general are needed since we see that to operate an X-wing absolutely requires the assistance of an astro-droid such as Artoo-Detoo.)

We meet Threepio in the midst of battle, but he is a bystander, a non-entity the combatants do not bother to attack or attach. His friend and he, in fact, escape and (unknown to him) carry the great secret away in safety because only life forms are subject to destruction in the conflict. In the course of the next few years (subjective), he wanders through a wasteland, is captured and sold by scavengers, helps invade a great weapon, assists in repairing a starship, is blown apart and put back together, endures slavery, loses an eye, becomes a god, and offers himself as sacrifice in order to save the day on Endor. Indeed. His is a very action-adventure existence--for a machine.

What is a machine? The simplest answer would be "a tool", a lawnmower that one keeps in the garage, takes out to use, cleans and then returns to its place. Like a familiar friend the mower may have quirks of obedience which give it the seeming of a personality, but it is, in fact, just a tool. It is a mechanical extension of the body of a human.

A computer--an electronic extension of the mind of a human--is higher on the mechanical evolutionary scale. It may have a voice; it can be given new information to effect new/different responses; it can even collect information on its own and synthesize to a certain extent, returning more fully developed service to its human handler. Given the near instantaneous reaction times of the computer, scientists have even learned to program a hesitation into the machines which guard/control destructive weapons. (In War Games, for instance, the computer three times asks if its opponent would not rather play a harmless game instead of nuclear war on a world scale.)

But that is very nearly a person's reaction. A human being, when faced with the unexpected, the frightening, the intolerable, will inevitably experience a moment of doubt: he will hesitate. So in programming our own self-preservation, the delineation between machine and man loses sharpness of definition in our own world.

In the STAR WARS universe the difference is seemingly non-existent. Here, the machine is married to the computer (body to mind) in much the same manner as the primitive robots employed in automobile

assembly plants on Earth--but with the final magical element added, the soul. As represented by Threepio and Artoo (who has more functions and gizmos than there are stormtroopers), they do everything a machine can do, everything a computer can do--and they feel. They have sorrows, regrets, joys, shocks. Part of the "mechanism" of an Artoo unit or the Millennium Falcon's hyperdrive is a motivator (for motivation). They may not be human, but they are people.

George Lucas has made them people. He says he made them people; but we need not take only his word. His actions, his films say the same thing; the characters in this universe treat them as equals. Leia Organa has no hesitation in trusting the Death Star plans to Artoo Detoo and giving him the task of getting them to Obi-Wan Kenobi. Chewbacca, admittedly a second or third class citizen in the eyes of the Empire, nevertheless is a person in the eyes of his friends, and he takes pleasure in playing holo-chess with Artoo. During the escape from Hoth, when Threepio's slower speed places him on the wrong side of a hanger barrier ("How typical!"), Solo remembers him as more than a convenient machine one can get anywhere. In fact, Solo has given him a nickname, Goldenrod--a sure sign in a human that he/she accords the machine being spoken of both personhood and affection. And Solo, though greatly exasperated by Threepio's helpful advice at various times in TESB, never gives a command that a droid must obey. Han may clamp a hand over Threepio's mouth-hole, hold up a commanding finger, even invite Leia to turn off the droid, but the approach is still one of human to equal. At any point, Threepio has the human option of striking away the hand, continuing to talk in the face of that finger, even fighting off the Princess.

His programming as a servitor (much like a human can be programmed by early life to being incapable of crossing a parent or religious head or other authority figure) is a factor in preventing these actions, as well as his own knowledge that he's a part of the team throughout. They are his friends just as he is treated by them as a friend. He feels for them. And in interaction with Solo, he is vindicated each time by being able to provide for the ship's captain the missing piece of information which has stymied all attempts to resolve the conflict, or to go to hyperdrive.

"I never knew I had it in me!"
(See-Threepio, RETURN OF THE JEDI)

The drama of people is predicated upon change, upon the capacity of the sentient and sapient mind to grow from one set of attitudes and ideals to another. As bad as he is, without Ebenezer Scrooge, there would be no "Christmas Carol"; it is his opportunity to change--and his fear and struggle against that change--which makes the story. In STAR WARS, Luke Skywalker's initial keen desire is to go out and experience adventure; and the contrast between

what he sought and what he finds forms one part of the drama. Just so is Threepio changed by his adventures.

The outward evidences are subtle, but they can be seen clearly in a few places. The subservient droid in ANH--who must be driven to enter a lifeboat ("You're not allowed in there!"), who automatically assumes a human is addressed as "sir" or "master", who isn't very good at telling stories ("or not at making them interesting")--becomes quite a different person by the end of Return of the Jedi.

While he retains the protocol of addressing humans by their proper titles, he has also, in the height of stress and action, called a human by only his proper name: "We've got to save Han from the bounty hunter!" He has been encouraged to seek answers ("Sir, may I ask a question?" "Why not?") and he questions orders ("What could possibly have come over Master Luke?"). He must have learned how to tell stories somewhere along the line, because he is able to enchant the Ewoks and the audience with a stirring version of the adventure to date--complete with gestures and sound effects.

Oddly enough, the one human (not caring for tin people) most visibly impatient with Threepio also is the catalyst for many of his changes. "Nobody cares about upsetting a droid!" Threepio complains during the chess game. Comes the reply: "That's 'cause droids don't pull peoples' arms out of their sockets when they lose!" The scene is filled with humor and designed for laughter, yet a statement has been made. If you don't want people to stomp on you, you have to stand up for yourself. If you can get away with it, go ahead and be a Wookiee, be a person. (And why play a scam, the threat from a soon-to-be-proven "cowardly" Wookiee, on a machine to win the game? Why not just order him to lose the game?)

Although Threepio recommends letting the Wookiee win in that circumstance, the information must have been filed away, just the first of many building blocks to his own freedom. Later in the film, when told to remain where he is (with Artoo just across from the Millennium Falcon on the Death Star), he makes an independent and correct decision to head for the safety of the ship the minute the way is cleared. And Threepio clearly considers himself and Artoo people when he offers parts of himself to fix the damaged astro-droid.

In the next film, the "Why not?" quoted before occurs. It's a response guaranteed to get the questioner's goat and it does. But the message is still there: why are you asking me for permission to ask a question? Why allow me that control over you? Thus challenged, Threepio seems to view the task, as well as the man, as "impossible." But gradually, through the course of Empire, Threepio begins to assert himself--offering advice and information with the faulty timing of the newly freed, heady with his freedom: "Surrender is a perfectly

viable alternative!" "Sir, I don't think this asteroid is entirely stable." "I've located the reverse power flux coupling." (And the reply, though forced through clenched teeth, is that of any polite human being to another: "Thank you!") Threepio continues, however, poking his nose into dangerous corners ("That sounds like an Artoo unit in there!"), and snapping his displeasure at his treatment at the hands of friends ("I'm backward! Only a flea-bitten old furball--") as well as enemies.

"We're made to suffer. It's our lot in life." (Threepio, A NEW HOPE)

I have said Threepio experiences an action-adventure life. Unfortunately, that is true because he is a person only to a few of those who know him best. The powers-that-be have been shown to consider living beings as lesser--second- or third- or even fourth- class--citizens ("Where are you taking this 'thing'?"). The average citizen, just trying to get along beneath a repressive society, exhibits the same attitude. Droids are even less in their eyes.

As such, droids are subject to the arbitrary nature of life as possessions--servants, slaves-- machines, not men. We see Luke Skywalker's Uncle Owen, struggling farmer, average citizen to all appearances, casually purchase the droids to work on his farm. Artoo is the one, his references to an Obi-Wan Kenobi disturbing human complacency, who is threatened with having his memory erased.

What would Artoo be like without his personality? From the beginning, he is shown to have his own feistiness and a range of vocal expression that, expressed in short bursts of sound, is nonetheless communicative of emotion as well as information. Without memory experience to show him the irony of life, how could he let loose a Bronx cheer at the correct provocation--how know a raspberry at all?

Even more, of what use would a protocol droid be without his memory? He may hold not only the record of millions of transactions between machine and machine and person and machine, of political nature or personal, but he must also have memory of interactions--both good and bad, productive and non--in order to perform his function, at least among humans. And the memory of incidents and beings and happenings and hurts and slights and happiness gives Threepio his own personality as well.

This situation reaches its dramatic nadir in Jedi when the two droids are given into Jabba's possession. There they meet the worst side of their experience: Nine-D-Nine, overseer in the palace, is lord of a room in which droids torture other droids--who cry out in pain.

"It is at times like this when Artoo and I wish we were truly human."

(See-Threepio, SW HOLIDAY SPECIAL)

But finally, also here in Jedi, we see the full growth of this character. Back with his small companion, he is enslaved. But his human friends help free him--even

as he helps to free them. Again, the attitude of the Alliance toward droids is shown in the presence of Threepio and Artoo (as well as the medical droid Two-One-Bee) at the briefing session where they participate in the planning, execution and triumph of the final push to free the galaxy from the domination of an evil Empire.

But how can they help? Who would expect them to? As pointed out before, the Imperial troops in the very first sequence of A New Hope do not shoot at Artoo and Threepio. The droids' lifeboat is allowed to pass safely because there are no life-forms aboard. Droids are, it would seem, nothing to worry about, for like good servants, they would never interfere for or against the actions of their "betters."

But the Empire is wrong. Droids are powerful enemies. They can move about unhindered and unnoticed. [For instance, without Lobot (man-seeming but obviously partially machine), Lando Calrissian could never have freed Leia and Chewbacca from the Imperial troops, and Luke would not have been saved on Bespin.] And they have motivators--for motivation to act.

Face to face with Nine-D-Nine (the worst of droids) are the best of droids that we've met. They have not only been entrusted with the interaction and lives of human beings, they have surpassed what

friends have asked of them. Only Artoo's communication with the city central computer enables him to give the final push to the Millennium Falcon (which Threepio had helped heal in the asteroid field) to take them into hyperspace at the close of Empire. Threepio's presence brings the assistance of the primitive Ewoks in a fashion no other of their group could have contributed. And Skywalker's expressed gratitude signals Threepio's realization that he is a person. He has a soul.

And like any other character, he can be a hero, one who finally acts rather than being acted upon. He is the one, who, having seen the danger the Imperial troops on Endor present to the mission team inside the bunker, steps out into the open to draw both attention and possible gunfire. "I say, over there! Were you looking for me?"

There he is, the golden man. He has been a symbol of kingship and autonomy and self-determination since the beginning of the stories. Now he is a hero. At the moment he frees himself--offers himself for humans as foreshadowed by offering himself for Artoo--the galaxy is also freed. The culmination of that long process which leads from youth to adult, boy to man, man to hero, he had triumphed, and his victory is that of his world.

NOTE: Opinions expressed herein are those of the speaker and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoints of the editor and staff of SOUTHERN ENCLAVE.

Consumer Corner

Equal space will be offered for replies.

FROM: Hilary Halperin, 2180 Holland Avenue #6B, Bronx, NY 10462:

In October 1981, I sent Candace Wiggins \$6.00 to reserve her zines FANFARE III and JEDI, TOO. After about 6 months, I sent a SASE inquiring about the zines, but she never wrote back. Later, I saw an ad in JUNDLAND WASTES for JEDI, TOO with a final price. But she never contacted me in all this time. I have requested assistance from several consumer organizations including the Better Business Bureau but they have been unable to help me. I have only to conclude that I have been robbed of my money. I wonder if others have had this problem with Ms. Wiggins? I strongly recommend that no one do any business with her in the future.

FROM: Debra Talley, 1356 Talcott Place, Decatur, GA 30033:

I sent Jani Hicks a \$30 check on July 29, 1983, for xerox copies of TWIN SUNS I and II. I have written her five times inquiring about my order. I received a reply only to the first one, promising delivery when she received enough orders to make a trip to the xerox machine worthwhile. Even my certified letter went unanswered. I asked for a refund on two occasions but have so far received nothing. I also advise everyone to avoid this offer.

Profile

Just out of sheer curiosity and so we can all get to know each other a little better and not just be names on paper, I'd like to start a "Fan Profile" column in SE. I'd like to invite anyone who feels so inclined to send in a short paragraph about themselves--married, number of children, hobbies (besides SW), colleges attended and degrees, majors, profession, etc. Just to get the ball rolling, I'll start:

Cheree Townsend Cargill, age 31, married for nine years to Randy Cargill, no children. We have two dogs, a German Shepherd (Thor) and a Beagle (Mandy). I have a BA in European history from East Texas State University and am currently working on a degree in geology (possibly specializing in vertebrate paleontology) from the University of Texas at Dallas. I'm a 3rd generation Texan, born and raised in the Dallas area. I am currently working as a legal word processing specialist for one of Dallas' major law firms. (I also very sneakily do my zines on my Wang word processor in my spare time!) Hobbies include needlecraft, reading, writing, video and talking geology with anyone ~~damn~~ interested enough to listen. Interests in fandom center primarily on SW, Raiders and Harrison Ford.

Reviewing the Fleet

Outland Chronicles #1, Phantom Press, Christine Jeffords, 630 Bloomfield Ave., Bloomfield, NJ 07044; \$7 by hand, \$9.75 fc, \$12 overseas air. 130pp.

Reviewed by Sandra H. Necchi

OC generally has neat, clear typing and few typos, but there are a few pages which could have benefitted from better centering as some of the inside margins are too close to the binding. The nicely stylized title typefaces are attractive.

OC#1 is an all-Han issue but the editor stresses that she doesn't intend OC to be a specifically Han zine. She has a good selection of stories and art, starting with "Chase to Karmack" by Charles Garofalo. "Karmack" is one of the very few stories that combine action/adventure with characterization. The former does predominate, occasionally to the detriment of the latter, but generally, it's a wonderful tour-de-force about Han's escape from Jabba and his subsequent adventures with Imperials, Boba Fett, a cowardly doctor and a near-empty, vulnerable rebel base.

Wanda Lybarger's illos are very apt for the story. They are filled with action, reaction, stark black and white contrast and a sense of humor.

"A Spark of Darkness and Light" by Scheherezade is part of a series, one of the few that has captured me. It's set after the revolution, written in Han's point of view, in the middle of Alliance political maneuvers against those who prospered under the Empire. The author intelligently identifies and characterizes the Empire supporters. Wendy Ikeguchi's illos are fitting, as they are dark, rough, strongly indicative of the danger the Alliance is in.

The one unsuccessful story in OC#1 is, sadly, the editor's. I say "sadly" because she put together such a successful zine that the one story she wrote for it should have had OC's general quality of exciting diversity and sensitivity. "Search", however, by Christine Jeffords, generally lacks this quality. It is nice to see a sympathetic portrayal of Lando, however; it has some good original ideas about aliens, and the writing, though rough, has obvious talent. I especially liked certain word choices, like "the door slid arthritically..." But other than that, the rest of the story doesn't ring true. The main character is Mari Sevenstars, a recurring character in Jeffords' "Brightstar" series. She is an "Azaeli" with--we are repeatedly told--a fierce and sometimes dangerous temperament. Han is her "swordbrother" and she sets about to organize a galaxy-wide search for Han, who is still in Jabba's clutches. [OC was published before the release of ROTJ, by the way.]

The problems come with the subplot, which resembles a soap opera. Here, Han's real lady is a Jedi named Skye, with whom he's fathered a child. He really doesn't love Leia, but was only trying to test her to see if she really has a heart and, if so, to "open her up" so she can give her love to Luke. Han doesn't appear well at all in this version of things. In this role, he's merely an officious, arrogant and presumptuous manipulator, playing with Leia's feelings, probably misunderstanding her totally, as well as Luke. Sevenstars, who feels loyalty and protectiveness to Han's "woman", takes it upon herself to whisk Skye away from the evil clutches of Princess Leia, Skye's rival. Can anybody honestly imagine Leia Organa being so petty and vicious that she would hate a rival so much as to endanger her and her unborn child's life?

As for the characterizations, Sevenstars, for all that we're told that she's something to fear, doesn't seem at all frightening, just a busybody. Skye is nothing but a pitiful little martyr who always has to be taken care of.

I haven't formed an entirely negative opinion of Jeffords' series, because I have only read this one story. She has a good alien character, but she should take care to flesh her out more.

Lin Stack's illos for "Search" are a little too uniform. One of Stack's illos, though, is heart-tugging: Chewie holding Han's newborn son who's busily tugging at the Wookiee's fur.

Karen Miller's "Where No Corellian Has Gone Before..." is fascinating, if a little too sentimental in places. It's a "mind dialogue" wherein Ben contacts Han, who's still in carbon freeze and who fights to the end against "the old man's" craziness, and leads Han's mind to Luke's. The interplay between Han and Ben is funny and warm. Between Han and Luke, it is poignant. Ikeguchi's illos are two of my favorites in the zine.

"An Interview with Harrison Ford" (accompanied by Lybarger's adorable stationery drawings of various HF film roles) is much too short! I wanted more! The editor transcribed it from a radio talk show. I don't know if too many people realize how really intelligent and articulate Harrison is.

"A Visit to Corell" by Helen Montgomery is an intriguing article about Han's world. The most interesting are the sections about the rigors of the climate and the various beasts waiting to eat you. Unfortunately, it ends just when it gets even more interesting, with a few tantalizing generalizations about the inhabitants.

Perhaps the best story in OC is Eva Albertsson's "Year of the Dragon," a story of 13-year-old Han Solo and his 6-year-old sister, Bethi, on a summer visit to their

country kin, one of whom is 14-year-old Zera, who becomes Han's first love. Although I found the traditional family roles a bit provincial, the story itself has its own reality and life because Albertsson writes well, vividly and sensitively. Despite the fact that Han and Zera are the principles, my favorite has to be Bethi, whose characterization is honest and funny. There are some hilarious moments here, especially with the kids' droid babysitter who, under Albertsson's skillful hands, comes to life. I sympathized with the indignities he is made to suffer under Corell's brutal climate, devouring bug-eyed monsters and the kids' own rewiring job.

This is a funny, warm, engrossing story

but there were two problems. There is precious little description of all the dangerous creatures and the ending is a bit questionable. Zera, who all along has been a tough, outspoken, imaginative girl becomes properly silent, almost subordinate, to her new boyfriend. Han does all the talking while she just "smiles indulgently" at him.

Martynn's illos of Han and Zera don't really look like teenagers; they more resemble 20-year-olds. But she does a convincing face for Han as a young boy.

Gennie Summers has some hilarious cartoons throughout and Cathye Paraci has a stunning, almost surrealistic cover of Vader. I can't describe it in words. Buy the zine and appreciate it for yourself.

Art Credits:

Cheri Tripp - 27, 40

Danaline Bryant - 1, 19R, 22, 36, 39

Jeanine Hennig - 41, 43R, 44, 49

Cheree Cargill - all other art

Carol Peters - 15, 17, 18, 19L, 20, 29, 30, 46, 51

An Editorial Comment

Take It Easy, Kid--It's Only a Movie!

Tweet! That's the signal for time out. Let's pause here and catch our breath and get back to reality for a moment.

Most of you have noticed that the level of emotions has been rising steadily over the last few issues among certain segments of our correspondents. A lot of you have commented on the fact and now I want to do so as well.

It's been a whole year now since ROTJ premiered. We've all made our feelings on the subject known, whether we absolutely love it or absolutely hate it. We are all entitled to our own opinions and sharing those opinions is what SOUTHERN ENCLAVE is all about. However, in the heat of debate over our respective opinions, ugliness has started to rear its head. I stated in the first issue that I didn't want a letter war to be carried on in these pages, but that is what is rapidly forming. I have had to zap more and more offensive statements in LoCs--things like "racist" and "stupid idiot" with names attached to them. I have printed other letters that hotly attacked the viewpoints of others, either arguing for the Fall of Luke Skywalker or against it.

Quite frankly, I'm getting weary of rehashing the same argument in every issue. Nobody is going to change anybody else's mind on this and the debate is starting to get out of hand, dredging up eight-year-old newspaper clippings or citing who said what about which character on a radio show in 1978 to lend support to a particular viewpoint.

COME ON, PEOPLE--IT'S ONLY A MOVIE! We are not arguing the future of mankind here or holding nuclear arms talks with the Soviets or even debating creationism versus

evolution. We are talking about a group of fictional characters in a fictional universe. It is not worth ending friendships over. We are supposedly doing this for fun, but attacking other people who don't agree with your viewpoint and hurting other people's feelings is not fun. So, can we please back off this subject for a while and let our tempers cool down? If you feel that you just can't drop it right now, then can you please submerge it to a private correspondence level?

There are lots of other things in the SW universe to discuss. Two excellent examples are the articles in this issue by Sandra Necchi and Jean Stevenson, regarding the reasons behind the Rebellion and the humanity of See-Threepio, respectively. How about discussing some of the other unanswered questions from the Saga? How did Leia get the plans for the Death Star in the first place? Darth told her, "You're not on any mercy mission this time." What did he mean by that? What sort of cover had Leia been using? In ESB, when 3PO commented that the Falcon spoke a most peculiar dialect, what did he mean? Is the Falcon semi-sentient, too? Was it maybe the ship and not necessarily Han's piloting that got them through the asteroid field?

This is a wide open universe and there are a lot of topics that need to be discussed. Let's get back to the reason we're doing this in the first place--because our imaginations are stretched and stimulated by these movies. As Tarkin said, "This bickering is pointless." It's also very destructive. Let's get back to the Light Side of the Force for a while.

World Premiere of the Jedi

Sally Smith

Tuesday, May 24, 1983, dawned clear and hot, a welcome change from the rain and snow of the past weeks. It wouldn't have dared be otherwise. I spent the day in a continuous hurry and a great state of excitement. This was it. This was what I'd been waiting for.

Somehow, my husband and I had scraped up the bucks (\$150) to go to the world premiere of RETURN OF THE JEDI. Although there were several premieres, the one in Denver was designated the world premiere, since Marvin Davis, owner of 20th Century-Fox, lives there. When I read about it, I immediately decided to go. I liked the idea of seeing JEDI before it opened, it was for a good cause (Children's Diabetes, Davis' pet charity), and the thought of being able to take a Star Wars movie off my taxes was just too good to pass up (besides, it was a good excuse to get my husband into a tux). It was the hottest ticket in town, sold out long in advance.

We set off about 6:15 for the theater. The reporters were all out en masse to catch anybody who looked even vaguely important. I've never seen so many cameras and minicams.

Before the movie started, we were subjected to introductions of the Governor, the people in charge of the theater, the people in charge of the charity, the people in charge of...and all of them had to make a speech about how wonderful this event was, blah blah blah. We heard a telegram George Lucas had sent (even that was dull) and (finally!) a short, funny speech from Tony Daniels, apologizing that he was here instead of Dudley Moore. There were also some lousy dancers, one person in a Darth Vader costume, plus two Ewoks.

At last, the lights went down and the movie started (none too soon; I was on the verge of a nervous breakdown). The society

mundane part of the audience was quiet, but the fans made more than enough noise for all. As we left the theater, we got small tote bags printed with the ROTJ logo and full of goodies--a T-shirt, belt buckle, box of cookies and so forth, all of which I've found very useful and nice to have.

Then it was off to the buffet party (quite a spread! Now I know how the other half lives!), where I got chicken l'orange on my dress. The closest I got to fame was when the "Entertainment Tonight" cameraman bumped into me.

Having had enough of high society, we left to go to the other theater to catch the midnight show with friends. We ended up sitting in the balcony on the floor, trying not to think about the dry-cleaning bills.

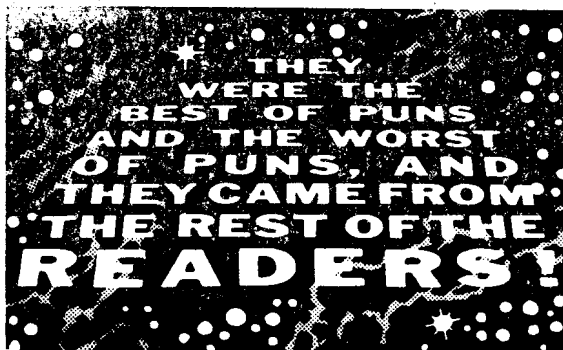
After that showing (and after showing off our formal attire to our friends), we changed into jeans and our new T-shirts and sat outside all night long with the gang to be the first in line for the 11 a.m. show (we'd bought our tickets in January). Nobody got inside ahead of us, believe me. Hell hath no fury like an overtired SW fan who somebody tries to cut in front of. I told one guy to go to the end of the line or I'd beat him up (I actually used much less polite language), and he believed me, even though he was twice my size. Guess the Force really can have a strong influence on the weak-minded!

I finally got to sleep about 4 p.m. Wednesday, after being awake for thirty hours straight, having seen ROTJ three times in sixteen hours, swearing not to do that again.

Until I read last month that they're doing the same thing this year for INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM.

I think I better go dig out my formal. Good thing the chicken came out.

FUNKY WINKERBEAN



Letters...

from a certain point of view

Lucy Nash
4341 Mineral Pt. Rd.
Madison, WI 53705

January 24, 1984

I have heard rumors of a new movement afoot in "Star Wars" fandom that has me very concerned. It seems there is a group of people trying to force all fans to follow their particular line on the development of the characters. In fact, they seem to be downright obsessive about it.

I will agree that Harrison Ford is an attractive man and that the character of Han Solo was fun to watch but these fans are so single-minded that they are unable to see past that actor/character. They are so blind that they apparently don't understand the story. How they ever got the idea that Han was the central character is beyond my ability to understand. If any of them ever checked the title page of the novelization of the first movie they could see right there that these stories are from the "Adventures of Luke Skywalker", not Han Solo. If they had seen the series of reports on the Today Show the week before the opening of "Jedi" they would have seen co-writer Lawrence Kasden talk about how this movie brings about the resolution of Luke's fate, that this was Luke's trilogy, not Han's. Yes, the character of Han did progress but he had to or Leia would have to have dropped him. No one with her maturity could possibly have gone on forever with a guy who, until "Jedi", had never gotten over adolescence. He had to become worthy of her. If he was treated like a buffoon at times, well, that was also his function. Whether these people accept it or not, he was part of the comic relief in "Jedi" and did very well at it. As for this nonsense about Han having to be strong now that Luke has fallen into the Dark Side of the Force, this can only have come about if

these people were asleep during the final moments of the confrontation between Luke, Vader and the Emperor. They missed the part of the scene where Luke tossed away his lightsaber and told the Emperor that he had failed and that Luke would not renounce the Light. Why else would the Emperor have tried to destroy Luke? They also apparently missed hearing Anakin tell Luke that he had been right about him (Anakin), meaning that Luke had sensed good in his father and had brought him back. No other interpretation of these events is rationally possible. But then these people don't sound as though they are entirely rational on this subject.

Even more disturbing than these factual errors is what the actions of these obsessive people is causing. One of the best things about any fandom like Star Wars' is the creativity that it stimulates in people who might otherwise have never tried writing, drawing, and producing a small-press magazine, or fanzine. These Ford/Solo fanatics are, from what I have heard, putting pressure on other fanzine editors to follow their own extremely narrow viewpoint in putting those fanzines together. This is wrong! These people have no right to stifle other creative minds this way. They descend to being merely bullies by doing so. This is contemptible. All of the characters of the SW universe have worth and all deserve to be explored.

The general run of SW fandom has something to answer for in this, too. Bullies can only get away with such tactics if you let them. Bullies are the biggest cowards in the world. The only way to deal with them is to stand up to them. They don't have the right to decide how every fanzine in this country should be run. Show them a united front against their foolish behavior and they'll crumple. They are obviously a bunch of adolescents, who, like the

character they are so obsessed with, have a lot of growing up to do. Don't allow them to splinter fandom. Eventually they'll destroy it.

One other point--while I am sure the Han Solo who existed for most of the 3 movies would have literally basked in all this slavish devotion, the Han at the end of "Jedi" would have been completely oblivious to them. As for Harrison Ford, from what I've seen and read about him, he wouldn't like all this fuss, either. Far from being flattered, I'd be willing to bet he'd develop a case of terminal embarrassment.

I do not fear these people. They are not worthy of fear. As long as they continue to be so irrational there is no good reason to take them seriously. I will give them all the attention they deserve--none.

((Editor's Note: This letter caused me a good bit of consternation, first of all trying to decide whether I should print it or not; but then I decided to stand by SE's stated "open forum" policy. I won't comment on her allegations regarding wrongdoing by some segments of fandom. I don't know if Ms. Nash has had some unfortunate incident or if she is the victim of vicious gossip. I tend to suspect the latter. However, I do want to comment on her statement that a group of fans are trying to force zine editors to print only their viewpoint. I have been in fandom for 13 years, most of that time involved in some sort of fan publishing and most of it as an editor. Not once in that entire time has any group or individual approached me or attempted to coerce me into printing only their viewpoint. I don't believe I have ever heard any other editor mention this problem either. I think we would all be most interested in hearing from anyone who has. If this is going on in fandom, it needs to be exposed, and if it's just gossip, it needs to end right now.))



Michelle Malkin
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February 26, 1984

I didn't think it was possible, but the last issue was even better than the previous two. This is great--keep it up!

Lots of letters to comment on this time, so I'll get right to it.

Chris Jeffords: Just had an interesting discussion with Tim Blaes about "what if the Empire isn't completely overthrown" or other possible developments after ROTJ. What if the governors all try to set up their own little empires? What if the Corporate Sector (a secondary universe, but still good for story ideas) tries to keep right on ruling its own sector? How about warlords, gangsters and dictators taking over various and sundry worlds? What if some worlds don't want to be reunited under a New Republic? After all, the old one fell apart in the end. Besides, was the Old Republic a full governing body or did it lead a loose confederation of independent worlds, sort of like our United Nations? (In response to the editor's note about Mon Mothma--the lady was mentioned in the novelization as being the person who originally organized the Rebellion and is its leader. She did not take Leia's place. It was never stated that Leia was actually the leader of the Alliance in movie or book.) Good idea about Jabba possibly being Force sensitive and using this to help him in his rise to gangster warlord. Quite possibly he doesn't even know he's using the Force, but just thinks

he has a few tricks that work for him. (This is sort of how I see Palpatine's development as a Force-user, only he comes to realize his talent for what it is and to much greater effect.) As for your letter now being the LoC That Ate The Letterzine, go to it! The longer the letters, the better I like 'em! ((Editor's note: I love long detailed LoCs, too, but--oh! my aching fingers after I get through typing them!--ha))

Mary Urhausen: Loved your letter. As long as it was, I couldn't find one thing in it that I disagreed with. Re your comment to Carole Regine, I am writing a story that partially involves Luke's possible left over feelings for his sister. It's a "Luke falls to the Dark Side" story--something I don't believe happened in ROTJ, but still a terrific story idea. Funny coincidence, too. You mentioned that you had stopped writing for ten years before you started writing again in the SW universe. The same exact thing happened to me. After writing some stories, articles and poems in the ST universe, I went into a ten year dry spell. Then, when SW came along, I suddenly found myself with the itch to write again. I've been at it for over five years now and have no desire to stop. In fact, I've gotten to the point where I'm ready to take my SW universe and develop it as my own universe for possible pro writing. Since SW is such a wide-open universe, leaving so much for us to develop on our own, it is easy to develop much that can be used after all the SW references are deleted. It's fun to contemplate this, and I've even started outlining what I hope will be my first pro novel. (This goes right along with the reply to Ann Wortham's letter in SE#2 that I was unable to fit into my letter in SE#3. If you have in-born writing talent, then writing media fiction as a hobby helps to hone those talents so that you may someday go pro. Fannish readers are some of the toughest critics I know. Besides, if Jacqueline Lichtenberg and Jean Lorrain from ST fandom can go pro, why can't some of us from SW fandom?) In response to your question about what Luke and Han say to each other at the Ewok celebration, I'm beginning to think that the recent version of the movie has

cut the bit between Han and Luke shorter than it originally was. I saw it several times where it looked like Han said, "Are you okay?" to Luke and Luke replied, "I'm fine." Now, it seems that Han doesn't say anything, but Luke still nods and says, "I'm fine." Strange.

Barbara Tennison: Your comments on Luke's reaction to learning that Leia was his sister make a lot of sense. Perhaps he was aware all along that his strong attraction to Leia wasn't a romantic one, but couldn't figure out the reason for it. Perhaps the same reasoning would explain Leia's reaction to finding out from Luke that she is his sister. She always did treat him in a very sisterly fashion; there were never any indications of romantic feelings for him from her. So perhaps, she had the same questions in her mind about her feelings for Luke all along. In that case, having her say, "Somehow I've always known" would also make a lot of sense.

Carole Regine: Very good point about Luke's hatred being powered by love during the final lightsaber battle between him and Vader. This doesn't necessarily make it a good thing, but there is a good reason for its existence. There has to be a difference between hatred brought on by a threat to a loved one and hatred caused by selfish reasons. Only in degree, perhaps, but it must exist.

Ann Wortham: You ask who the hero in the SW saga really is. Why, it's Wedge Antilles, of course! Who saves Luke's life in both ANH and TESB and then goes on to assist in the destruction of the second Death Star? Come on, all you Wedge fan, now is the time to speak out for your hero!

Debbie Gilbert: I agree with you that Luke's calling out to his father for help was not a sign of weakness, but I don't see it as grasping at a last possible solution only, either. This is an excellent explanation, but I also see Luke reaching out to his father because he can still sense the conflict going on in him. Of course, Luke wants to help himself, but he wants to help Vader, too. If Vader doesn't do something, they are both lost. Luke will die (and possibly the Rebellion with him), but Vader

will remain the Emperor's slave for the rest of his life.

Martie Benedict: There is a perfectly good explanation for George Lucas referring to Luke's "final turn to the bad side of the Force." Once Luke did this and then immediately after rejected it, he would never turn to it again. That was the final time he would do it. As for Yoda's line about "once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny"--anything you do dominates your destiny, good or bad. Any kind of choice you make will affect your future, but having made that choice doesn't necessarily mean that you'll always be stuck with it. You can change your mind and try to make some new affects on your destiny. Yoda also said, "Always in motion is the future."

Jean Stevenson: You misquoted my letter in SE2. I never said that the examination of the idea that Luke has possibly fallen to the Dark Side is sick. It should be clear that what I said and meant was that the totally negative pursuit of that idea or any idea to the degree that it causes the end of several friendships (I know of at least five in New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania alone) is sick. We are discussing interpretations of a movie, not World War III. By the way, why are you writing Jedi with a small "j"? Just curious. I agree with you 100% that there is no proof that Han has spent his life catting around the Galaxy. This isn't to say that the gorgeous hunk is virginal, but the way he is drawn in an awful lot of SW fan fiction would either have him dead of a zapped liver or of at least 42 varieties of venereal disease in short order, if not simple exhaustion.

Tim Blaes: I remember that viewing of ROTJ at the theater in Michigan last MediaWest*Con, too. I also remember the whole gang of us being shifted from one room of the theater to another at the last minute. I certainly hope that we'll be seeing "Temple of Doom" at another theater or that this one will have gotten its act together this time. Thoroughly enjoyed your letter in SE3 and the bits of humor you put into it.

Bev Clark: You are definitely right about Luke getting

jumped on no matter how he acts. If he does one thing, a lot of fans will say he's rotten. If he does another, then someone will be sure to call him spineless. The poor guy can't win! The same for the other main characters, but particularly for him, since he is THE main character. Thanks also for pointing out why the number of LoCs to fanzine editors that get actual responses from the editor (other than appearing in the next issue of the zine) is very small. Aside from working full-time jobs (including being a housewife--that's just as much a full-time job as any other), putting the zine together (including typing, graphics, corresponding with artists and writers, trying to carry on regular correspondence with friends), there is barely enough time left over for eating and sleeping. But, this does not mean that these LoCs are not wanted. Please, fellow fen, send LoCs to the zines you read whenever you can. These LoCs are the only way writers, artists and editors know that their work is or isn't appreciated.

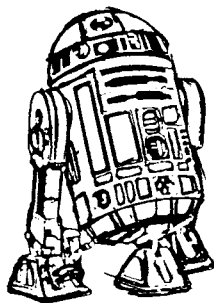
Marcia Brin: If Han hadn't wanted Luke to leave the mission on Endor, I'm sure that he would have said so very vehemently. Han is not one to pull his punches. But, he must have realized that what Luke said he had to do was just as important as what he and Leia and his troops had to do. As I've mentioned in other letters, Luke may now be a Jedi and free to do as he sees fit--with the agreement of the Alliance. It's quite possible that this is the way that the Jedi have always worked--with the military but free to make their own decisions. Also, perhaps if the Emperor's attention hadn't been so strongly on Luke, he might have realized that the Death Star had been breached. So, Luke's sacrifice does serve a possible purpose. At the end of ROTJ, Luke does not look alone and lonely to me. He could just be standing off by himself to catch his breath and get his thoughts in order. After all, he and everyone else have been through quite a lot. When the Three Stooges put in their astral appearance, Luke looks very happy and even winks at them. When Leia notices that Luke is by himself and comes over to get him, Luke looks very pleased and happy and

gladly returns to his friends. By the way, if we saw Luke hugging and being hugged by everyone at the celebration, it would take up half the movie. We are concerned with the people that he is closest to and who are closest to him. Everyone is celebrating, hugging, dancing, and the idea of success and relief is what GL is probably trying to get across--not the gloomy idea that Luke is being cut off by anyone or doing any cutting off himself. As for the Ewoks, they're so busy dancing and having a good time that they may simply not have noticed that Luke has returned. Why do you stretch "logic" to the breaking point to find grimness that doesn't exist? Also, a friend has pointed out to me the possibility that Luke may never marry because he will be kept so busy seeking out and training new Jedi. My response to that was that Luke is very young. He could spend many years doing this and still have many years in which to marry and raise his own children. In this way, he could live a full life in which he satisfies both his responsibilities and his personal desires. Besides, this is a modern fairy tale. Nowhere is it written that the old fairy tale forms have to be followed exactly. In this tale, the son does defeat the father to take his place, but he does not kill his father (the cackling brainburn case did that), and he takes his place for the good and not just for the sake of taking his place (I realize that you disagree with this, but this is my interpretation).

Melody Corbett: If Han turns out to be a Jedi in wolf's clothing after all, I will be terribly disappointed. It would mean that the Han we have all been shown has all along been a lie--a total fabrication. But, I wouldn't mind having him turn out to be Force-sensitive unbeknownst to himself. In that case, with the proper training from the proper teachers (the little blonde guy and his sister), he could become a Jedi or just a Force-user, if he so chooses and without any change to his personality.

One last comment: I have seen letters in this zine and others in which other fens' opinions are treated scornfully and with sarcasm that closely approaches personal attack. I

have a feeling that this kind of sarcasm is going to be the replacement for personal attack, since some editors won't print personal attacks. As far as I'm concerned, one is as bad as the other because they serve the same purpose--to belittle a person with a differing point of view without actually settling anything.



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February 29, 1984

Enjoyed the articles, as usual. One tends to forget Bib Fortuna and this was a good reminder that the character existed and had potential unused in the movie. This is almost a hallmark of the SW films, that even the minor figures are detailed enough to support personalities and histories, all part of the universe's comprehensive background.

Terri Black's black-and-white symbolism article is nicely reasoned--at last, an explanation for all those underlit expanses of interior space in the Imperial vessels, when one might expect something more in the way of surgically harsh overlighting!--but I'd like to add a few comments. I might question whether the white AT-AT walkers and Star Destroyers are much on public view except in battle situations, in which the participants are likely to have predetermined ideas of which side is the right one, but this is a minor point and does not invalidate the philosophical side of the argument. While the article gives a consistent interpretation of what the Jedi characters wear in terms of light (or white) vs. dark (or black), the Jedi's clothing may

have other messages as well. I note that Obi-Wan and Yoda wear more neutral colors than anyone else (so does Luke, on Dagobah the first time). This may signal that the Jedi consider themselves politically independent of the Empire and the Alliance. They associate with the Alliance by choice, not definition. Certainly I've seen some arguments lately that Luke "deserted" the Alliance by following the Jedi leaders' instructions, which would mean the Jedi were separate from the Rebels in some sense.

Jean Stevenson's article seems to suggest (to me) that Leia may have been the "other" in that she has already been using the Force in her political activities to date: that would be, as an Alliance leader and quite possibly as a Senator before she openly joined the Rebellion. The Force's influence on the "weak minded" could have been even more useful in the Senate than in physical battles. (I'm sure someone has mentioned this before in connection with Leia being the "other", but it bears restating.) It would be a use of the Force for both knowledge and defense, in a milieu where knowledge often is a defense! In supporting the Rebel Alliance, Leia is almost automatically in the role of questioning authority, although she does not appear to question the need for opposition to the Empire which is the Alliance's only authority. One hopes--and in so intelligent a character, assumes--that she did look at all the alternatives before deciding to put herself at the service of this particular bunch of Empire-opposers.

Han Solo's, uh, carnal reputation has often been exaggerated by fan stories to the point of incredibility. Part of this may be an expression of the fan opinion of Han Solo (or Harrison Ford) apart from his role in SW, and part may be follow-the-leader. However, it seems justifiable to say that the character as given in the movie--a foot-loose, independent, less-than-strictly-law-abiding, self-confident and healthy man in the prime of adulthood--would have acquainted himself with some variety of whatever sort of sexual partners he would accept. The obvious suggestion in terms of logistics, that Chewbacca was his most available partner,

has not been picked up for a number of reasons (if nothing else, cross-species sex is problematic at best). It is true that an independent space-travelling trader might not have a lot of time out from earning his living to devote to romance, but his demeanor with Leia herself suggests that he'd had a little practice at the pastime.

The anti-Luke stance taken by some fans has surprised me considerably. Luke was clearly the central character of the story structure (though he has strong competition for audience interest in Han and Leia), and almost by definition could not be a bad guy in the end. This is a Saturday-matinee kids' movie, in outline (Lucas says so). The many and subtle arguments advanced for Luke's turning toward the Dark Side illuminate the complexity of his moral problems, but I fear that they are not ultimately convincing. Luke may deal with moral questions in the course of his actions, but he still comes out on top by any measure I can see: His overriding moral goal seems to be to reconvert Darth Vader to the light side, in which he is finally successful. His side wins. He rejoins his friends, who give an open appearance of welcoming him as a valued participant in the battle. More important, he is rejoined by his Jedi mentors who also beam approval. Regardless of what the future may hold (and the dark hints do make this an interesting question, granted), he has won in his part of the battle over Endor.

In answer to Terri Black's query about the canonicity of the radio serial, strictly speaking I'd have to call them another secondary source. I must admit, though, that the simple fact of their being a dramatic presentation, even without pictures, makes them "feel" more like original SW instead of explanations of SW (like the novelizations) or SW filtered for young children (like the storybooks).

In regard to Terri's discussion of the progressively more three-dimensional space battles, I think it was one of Larry Niven's characters who observed that planet dwellers' view of reality is distorted by the presence of a massive gravity well. True three-dimensional (or four-dimensional, counting the time

element) perception is rare hereabouts; we haven't needed it much yet. That's a really good point of pure science fiction.

In answer to Marcia Brin's letter (and less directly to a comment in Jean Stevenson's), she is quite right that the scenario in which Leia might be allowed an active role in galactic affairs only if she is sterile, is extremely sexist. It is an extrapolation of the extremely unequal ratios of the sexes shown on screen in the SW universe, and is intended to illustrate the sexism inherent in that fact. I quite agree that Leia was probably intended at least partly as a reminder of the life and fertility that are missing from the battlefield, but why should there be only one (two, counting the Ion Cannon Operator; at any rate a miniscule ratio) such reminder? In a technologically advanced society there is little reason to keep women from being soldiers, pilots, X-wing techs, or whatever, and some good reasons to put them into these roles--smaller body mass, faster reaction time, etc. I doubt if the filmmakers intended to imply that human women in the SW universe were all Imperial loyalists, weaklings, or broodmares (and their treatment of Leia does not suggest it). But in a society which has advanced medicine and technology, the skewed gender ratio requires an explanation. MTFBWY!



Carole Regine
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March 9, 1984

Yipes! I didn't think my comment that a married Han Solo would "probably commit adultery ...", etc. would raise such vigorous protest from certain folks! Dr. Mary Urhausen asks where the "Intergalactic Stud Myth" originated (INTER-galactic?! Wow, I figured maybe just a few star systems in one galaxy...) Cheree's suggestion that this myth was born in the fantasies of horny fen is funny and partially true, but we horny Hanatics didn't twist an image of Unworldly Innocence to suit out dreams. Han, when we met him in the cantina, was a tough, sarcastic smuggler rubbing elbows with the scum of the Galaxy. He didn't object to working for a criminal and his "me first" attitude stuck out like a sore thumb. Hard to assume that this guy sought only Meaningful Relationships with women ... We never see Han linked with any women (except Leia) on screen but I think Mr. Spock's analogy to human characteristics and behavior is applicable here: "If I drop a hammer on a high gravity planet, I need not see it fall to know that it has, indeed, fallen." Men who choose Han's former lifestyle aren't usually known to share Maiden Aunt Martha's views about sex. Some might have exaggerated Han's energy, but I doubt that an Innocent has been slandered.

For the reasons stated above, I'd find it difficult to believe that Han practiced sexual abstinence from his first wink at Leia till his chosen lady was ready for romance. By TESB, Han has changed a bit from the man we met in ANH, but he hasn't suffered an Anakin Skywalker Personality Death, to be reborn as an entirely different person.

By ROTJ, Han has committed himself to the Rebellion and (at least informally) to Leia. I do not believe Han will desert the Alliance or "abandon" Leia. (Jean Stevenson, please take note: I never suggested that Han would do either. In fact, I did say, "I can't imagine Han and Leia parting company".) Han has changed in the course of three movies and, if he and Leia do marry, I don't see him slip-

ping off to the local brothel two days later. But what will happen to their relationship when peace comes to the Galaxy? Will Han enjoy his role as Solid Citizen of the Restored Republic? The characters I saw on screen would have to suffer a Death of Personality to enjoy a safe and secure, routine life. Love for Leia might stop Han from revving up the Falcon and taking off for parts unknown, but I think he'd always look back at a more colorful and adventurous past. Eventually, I believe he'd take off for limited periods trying to recapture some of his old freedom. And given what I believe his lifestyle once was, I do think he'd easily drift into sexual wandering. I don't see Han as a shallow stud incapable of love and commitment, but I would predict a very difficult marriage and broken promises if Han's emotional commitments tie him to a "world" he'll never belong in.

IF... It's all speculation, folks. So, if anyone out there wants to predict a happier future for Han (without turning him into either Jesus or Dagwood Bumstead), I'd love to hear it.

To Marcia Brin: I think Han's a positive sweetheart, too, but I can't agree that he always was such a nice human being--and I don't think Leia considered him a "nice man" in TESB. Leia's reaction to Han, on the Falcon en route to Bespin, indicates to me that she still saw him as something of a mercenary. He'd risked his life for Luke's and he saw Leia safely off Hoth, but Leia still expected him to leave her and desert the Alliance. (Had she expected him to return after settling with Jabba, she'd have had no reason to be angry over his intention to leave.) Yet, seeing him in this light, she fell in love with him. I've always suspected that Leia was more attracted by Han's courage, self-confidence and blunt honesty than by any hope that he could life up to her standards of what "nice men" ought to be. I won't argue with anyone who points out the virtues Han began to display, even as early as ANH, but I don't think Leia believed she'd fallen in love with a "nice man". By the way, I agree with your thought that there's a difference between presenting an argument and just

dismissing another's opinion. Anyone who insists that their opinion is The One and Only Truth has taken a giant step backward into childish thinking. IDIC!

To Terri Black: Just wanted to say thanks for an excellent article on the symbolism of black and white in the SW Saga. You called attention to many details I'd never given thought to previously.

To Tim Blaes: Loved your list of ten ideas for "what if" stories. May I add an eleventh? What if Vader had learned of his children's birth while Luke and Leia were still toddlers? What if he'd tracked them down and brought them home to be raised on the Dark Side?

To Mary Urhausen: Fascinating theory that Vader might not be Leia's father. Wouldn't this sort of pregnancy require Mrs. Skywalker to have...er...indulged her passions with two different men within a rather brief span of time? Any notion who the happy father (of Leia) might've been? Hmmm... Join me, Mary, and together we'll slander the whole Galaxy! But seriously, neither of our speculations is likely to turn up on screen and as much as I enjoy fanfic, I do want to see GL's version of the Past and Future. I completely agree with your thought that if we bite the hand that gave up SW, we're only hurting ourselves. ROTJ wasn't perfect, but what is? Tearing it to pieces is no way to ask for six more episodes.

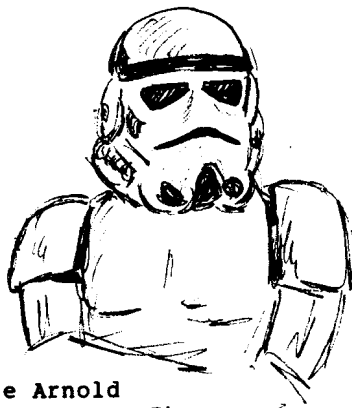


Carol Peters
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March 9, 1984

In reading some of the letters I wonder if they saw the same RETURN OF THE JEDI as I did. Didn't anyone go to see it just for the fun and sheer joy of watching another installment in the STAR WARS Saga? I was there the first day, first showing and it was very exciting. Out of the 350 people there to see it, all but 25 were adults. It's hard to express the feeling of anticipation that was running through the audience while we waited for the movie to begin. We had an extra long wait because they let us into the theater early due to the temperature--at 10 a.m. it was already 110 degrees!

To answer Danaline Bryant about Luke's aunt and uncle on Tatooine, if you read page 66 of the ROTJ novel, Obi-Wan tells Luke that he was sent to live with his brother, Owen.



Rose Arnold
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March 18, 1984

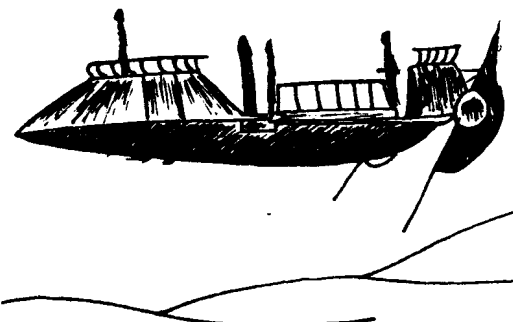
I don't much like to see the continuation of the Han vs. Luke arguments, but as long as everyone is civil, a little disagreement can't hurt.

I wish I could write such literate, cogent and intelligent letters like those in SE. Even when I disagree with one, it's usually so well written, it's very persuasive. Just proves what I hoped would happen: SW lives! At least for a while.

Questions or "canon" about SW I'd like to see answered or discussed:

Has anyone ever dissected the name Millennium Falcon? It has a marvelous ring, but it really doesn't make any sense! Most of GL's other names have some further significance besides their inherent sound, but a "thousand-year bird"?

Another question--I can't be the only person who saw Luke "tell" Leia he loved her in TESB. It happened almost at the end, after Leia and the Falcon have turned back to pick Luke off the antenna; he is on the bunk in the Falcon, Leia is ministering to his injuries, she kisses him on the forehead and says she will be back. As she turns away from him, he turns his head, follows her out of the scene with his eyes and mouths "I love you." I've always wondered but especially now after the revelation of JEDI, whether Mark ever actually said it out loud and it was eliminated on the final soundtrack because of the coming "relationship". Maybe the scene was done that way just to tantalize the audience or maybe as an echo of the AMERICAN GRAFFITI "blonde in the the white T-Bird" who mouths "I love you" to Curt which led to his frantic search for her through the rest of the movie: A young man's search for his "dream girl." I've never been able to figure out how Luke could change so fast from declaring his love (in his mind at least) to the "understanding friend" at the end of TESB. (Poor Luke--I still think he got shafted all the way around.) Maybe I'm just nit-picking, but these two things have always bothered me (as well as Han the "Corellian" and the obvious one--we really aren't told until JEDI that Luke's home planet is named Tatooine. In TESB it's just a "rendezvous". I noticed in TESB and ROTJ they are a bit more careful to identify where the characters are and where the action is happening).



Ann Wortham
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March 18, 1984

Many thanks to all the readers of SOUTHERN ENCLAVE who responded to my letter with offerings of support and friendship; it's good to know that the rest of fandom resents being treated as illiterates just as much as I do. I also appreciate the many fans who pointed me towards Harry Chapin's song "Mister Tanner."

I have to agree with Mary Urhausen when she says that fans who are irritated about ROTJ should quit griping and write their own alternate universes. That is, after all, part of what fanzines are all about! I also agree with her view of Darth Vader--I was never a Vader fan until ROTJ. I actually cried when he died!

Michelle Malkin's comments about Luke facing his Dark Side really hit home. It seems pretty obvious to me that Luke rejected his Dark Side when he refused to kill Vader; after all, throwing his lightsaber to the side was a terribly final act! Once he gave up his weapon he didn't have a chance against the emperor.

To Tim Blaes: I can't believe that the OSWFC would have the nerve to tell you that you were presumptuous and stupid for submitting an idea to them. Just who do they think they are? If the fans don't join their fan club, they won't have a fan club for very long! This attitude amazes me.

One last comment regarding Melody Corbett's question about the reversal of the twin suns in ROTJ. The only answer I can think of is artistic license. The only alternative is that somebody screwed up and we all know that can't be true!

((Editor's Note: There may be a clue in the novelization of ANH. Second paragraph of chapter 1: "Yet both massive G1 and G2 stars orbited a common center with peculiar regularity, and Tatooine circled them far enough out to permit the development of a rather stable, if exquisitely hot, climate." I don't know how scientifically accurate this is but I guess it's plausible. We really don't know anything about the orbit of Tatooine and the two stars.))



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March 20, 1984

My friend Pam and I decided to pool our efforts in one letter rather than write two that said essentially the same thing. She has read more fantasy than I, so any such references are hers. So here we go.

Chris Jeffords: Why does the central hero have to marry the heroine in fantasy? Tolkien didn't follow that pattern, in fact there were no Hobbit heroines. The creator of a fantasy can bring as much reality in as he or she chooses to. Kurtz' Kelson Haldane is still a bachelor at the end of High Deryni.

Did you mean to make a distinction between an "epic hero" and simply a "hero"? If so, what is your source of reference material? What makes Indy a "hero" and Luke an "epic hero"? Is Alric Morgan from Deryni a "hero" and Moreta "epic"? Why?

Regarding Indiana Jones: yes, he went into the Well of the Souls, but not alone (it takes two to handle the Ark, you know). Whether he actually "conquered" his fear is debatable; this wasn't your average fear--it was a phobia. The first thing he said after the encounter with the cobra (and he sure looked afraid there) was, "Sallah, get down here!" Then he removed as many sources of fear as he could. It's been a while since we've seen the film, but from the novel we had the impression he couldn't wait to get out of there.

Good point about fan writing. Don't forget Jean Lorrah. She won her English doctorate by using fan writing to sharpen her skills.

Mary Urhausen: Bravo! It can't be said often enough! The Saga is GL's to do with as he pleases, just as Pern is McCaffrey's, Gwendydd is Kurtz', the Land is Donaldson's and, well, you get the idea.

Good question! Where did the Han Solo As Superstud myth come from? Likewise, where did the idea originate that Han's a boozier? No doubt from the same fertile minds.

Speeder bikes starting fires? Pardon if you hear faint laughter, but has anyone out there tried to start a fire in a rain forest? Even dry, seasoned wood still picks up a certain amount of moisture; there's no such thing as a blazing campfire that becomes a bonfire. If left unattended for any length of time, it will go out and just smoulder in that kind of environment.

Michelle Malkin: Hi! Just wanted you to know we pretty much agree with what you said. On the subject of questioning authority--when Luke tells Ben, "I won't kill my father," Ben replies, "Then the Emperor has already won." Yet if Luke did kill Vader, the Emperor would have won, because that's exactly what the Emperor wanted Luke to do. Interesting, eh?

A little LOUDER, please! Luke saw his artificial hand and his father's electronic stump; then and there, he "realized suddenly how much he had become like his father. Like the man he hated." The entire Luke/Vader/Emperor segment is about Luke confronting and rejecting the Dark Side. Quoting again from the novel:

"Luke stared at his father beneath him, then at the Emperor, then back at Vader. This was Darkness--and it was the Darkness he hated. Not his father, not even the Emperor. But the Darkness in them. In them and in himself."

"And the only way to destroy the Darkness was to renounce it, for good and all. He stood suddenly erect, and made the decision for which he'd spent his life in preparation."

"He hurled his lightsaber away. 'Never! Never will I turn to the Darkside! You have failed, Palpatine. I am a Jedi,

as my father was before me.'" (emphasis original)

As you say, Luke is somewhat apart from his friends just by virtue of who and what he is. But that's not the same as saying that they have rejected him or shut him out. They have loved him and are always there when he needs them. You know if the Saga were only about responsibility and duty, if it were devoid of love and human emotions, the heart would go right out of it. It would be dull and cold.

Terri Black: We understand your point of view about shock and the showing of emotions. It often takes both of us a day to emotionally react to news that is jarring, such as a death in the family. Why can't Leia be the same way? Surely there are other people that have the same delayed response time to sudden, unexpected news? And, really, do we need scene #125--"Leia Falls Apart"?

Bev Clark: We essentially agree with you, but in a different way. Of course, Luke cannot love his father, as his father, because he has never known him. He probably has a love that has been built from an image, however. He can feel a compassion for him, if we understand the definition correctly, "a deep feeling of sharing the suffering of another." Even the Emperor sees this motivation in Luke when he tells Vader, "His compassion for you will be his undoing." As Michelle pointed out, surely he can sense the conflict in his father through the Force. Luke could offer this compassion and sympathy freely, without conditions. However, it's up to the person on the receiving end to accept or reject it.

You are so right; it seems Luke is damned if he does and damned if he doesn't. As another example, there is the matter of whether he did or did not invite Leia to join him at Anakin's funeral pyre. If he did ask her, he'd be accused of insensitivity; if he didn't, he'd be accused of the same thing. It's our feeling that whatever he did, her welfare would be uppermost in his mind. Perhaps he sensed intuitively that she was not really prepared for the experience. Her only knowledge is of Darth Vader; of Anakin Skywalker she knows less than Luke does, which is not

much. We know how hard this had been on Luke; what will she go through when it all sinks in?

Pam and I are both confirmed Han Solo fans. That doesn't mean we go on fault-finding expeditions where Luke or any other character is concerned. We have no objection to Luke being the pivotal character in "the Adventures of Luke Skywalker". It just makes Han's role all that sweeter. He's a bonus as it were, and we can handle more than one hero in a story.

Marcia Brin: We'll state it again, maybe not in Dolby, but in stereo nonetheless, the three reasons Luke left the Endor mission.

(1) He has become a liability to the group rather than an asset. He knows this earlier when he senses Vader on the Executor, and knows Vader senses him on the shuttle. "I'm endangering the mission; I shouldn't have come." Later he tells Leia, "Vader is here...now, on this moon...I felt his presence. He's come for me. He can feel when I'm near. That's why I have to go. As long as I stay, I'm endangering the group and our mission here. I have to face him."

(2) He's going to face Vader, something both Ben and Yoda told him he must do. The means by which he accomplishes this are left up to him.

(3) He's going because of his firm conviction (not mere wishful thinking) that there is still good in his father, and that he, Luke, can reach it. And, he is right. If that is selfishness, so be it.

Also, whether he intends it or not (and it well may have entered his mind), Luke functions as a very effective diversion. From the very minute Luke and Vader cross sabers, the Emperor's attention focuses on them and away from the battle going on around the Death Star II. The Emperor's sole concern now is obtaining himself a new Dark Lord. Overconfidence is his weakness and a fatal one. He loses Vader, he loses a potential replacement, he loses the battle, and he loses his life. The score is Luke 4, Emperor 0, a pretty impressive score for someone who is not fulfilling his responsibilities.

Something confuses us. Chris Jeffords said, "Hasn't he (Luke) already seen from Ben's example

that corporeal death doesn't mean extinction? Shouldn't he take comfort in that fact?" But you say, "The films say you cannot be one with the Force until you die, which is hardly comforting." Who's right?

Whoa galloping hoofbeats! How can you have feelings of total oneness with something whose potential you are just beginning to understand? If you must know 100% about everything to be a Jedi, then there would be none. Even Kenobi and Yoda were still learning, and they had decades and centuries to perfect their comprehension. But you do reach a point where your understanding, your knowledge of what it can do, of what it means are such that you can call yourself a Jedi. That is where Luke is now. He believes in himself, he believes in the Force, he understands that it is a part of him, and he of it. This enables him to accomplish what he does in JEDI. And, of course, he will continue to learn. As to "tricks and nonsense", Yoda and Ben aren't above using them when they serve a purpose. Nothing Luke does in JEDI is for the purpose of showing off, "look what I can do." He has some definite goal in mind.

Leia will certainly think of Luke as more than a "cherished friend". He's her brother, the only one she has, and her only living blood relative. It's natural for her to feel closer to him. There's no reason why she can't move in more than one circle. When you marry or move away, you don't cut yourself off from your family. Leia is the first to go to Luke when he arrives on the command ship. She's the first to greet him at the celebration and it is she who draws him back into the group.

Of course, Han is all the things you say he is. We got the impression he told the rebel officer he'd meet them back at the bunker at 0300 because he fully expected to find Leia before then. We don't think he's going to leave her out there on a moon crawling with Imperials.

Alright, we give up. What book and author explains the entire theory of the monomyth? If the statement you made is correct, then explain why Luke, while still dealing with Vader, stopped, thought, then threw his saber away, declaring, "I am a

Jedi, like my father before me." Somehow, we don't think he is referring to Vader; he hasn't become Vader. By stopping short of killing Vader, throwing away his saber and therefore his anger, he has made atonement with the ogre. He has broken the circle by not becoming Vader. Likewise, Luke puts himself between his father and the Emperor while Vader is still the "enemy", hardly the actions of someone who is treating Vader like "chopped liver." The Emperor is still a very real threat, Vader at that point is in no real shape to defend himself, and Luke knows it. If Luke were really as callous as he's made out to be, he'd have left the broken body in the black armor behind. At that point it was just a body, not Anakin, not Vader. The Emperor knows when Luke throws his saber away, he has lost him. He failed to win Luke over, to make him take his father's place at his side. His "So be it, Jedi" is an insult because Luke won't join the cozy little cir cleof Darkside followers. Remember the next line, "If you will not be turned, you will be destroyed."

Begging and screaming, um. Apparently, if Luke lies there and dies quietly, he's a dignified dead hero and therefore unrepachable. He might even be allowed to scream, because torture hurts, as long as he does not sacrifice his dignity. But, if he takes one last chance to reach the goodness he knows to be in Vader, to give him one last opportunity to redeem himself, then he is "begging". If the question is, is Luke ready to risk his life for others, the answer is yes, and he has proven this many times. Martyrdom is all very well, but if you are going to die, make it count for something.

Which leads to the question, what would Luke's death on Bespin have accomplished except more useless sacrifice? That question leads to another one. Wouldn't Leia and Lando have been selfish after having "heard" Luke, to say, "Forget him, we have to save ourselves." If Luke is selfish for leaving the group on Endor, then so are Leia, Chewie and Lando for going off at the beginning of ROTJ to rescue a friend whose predicament is really his own fault. Ben Kenobi selfishly leaves the

group in SW to confront his former pupil, knowing he will probably die (in fact he sets up his own death) when he would have been more valuable to the Rebellion alive, teaching the ways of the Force to Luke and to anyone else that might show potential. Seems Luke wasn't the only selfish person in the Saga; looks like he keeps good company.

Finally, we offer this generic paragraph, a little food for thought. It's fun to speculate and theorize about a story ahead of time, but when you enter a theater, or sit down with that next book in a series, you'd better leave the preconceived notions behind, and watch or read it with an open mind. Otherwise, you're setting yourself up for whole heaps of disappointment. Your criticisms, which of course are healthy, will tend to be disoriented and questionable at best. You can't constructively criticize if you are inserting what doesn't exist, or having to twist or distort in order to ease whatever betrayal you feel. It's something to think about.



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March 20, 1984

I think I'll start off my letter with an item from the Bad Joke Dept. (courtesy of READER'S DIGEST): "If Ella Fitzgerald married Darth Vader, she'd be Ella Vader." ((Editor's Note: Did you know that Darth Vader's family comes from Southern California? You never heard of the Oakland Vaders?))

Speaking of our favorite Repentant Jedi, has anyone read

an interview with James Earl Jones concerning his contribution to the Saga? I've heard something from all the other major actors but nothing from Jones. I wonder what his feelings are about his wonderful addition to that character's persona.

I have heard that there will be a second album released that will contain the missing music from ROTJ. Anybody know if this is true? ((Ed's Note: there is an album out called THE STAR WARS TRILOGY that is a combination of music from all three movies, including two never recorded pieces, "TIE Fight" and "Vader's Death" from ROTJ, but those two are really such incidental pieces, I didn't feel that I had been missing much. Also, did I dream it or was there a second SW album out in 1977 with additional music on it? I seem to recall debating on buying it but never did and now I can't remember if there ever was such an album or not.))

Does anyone know if TESB will be in re-release any time soon? I read that it was to be out this past fall but it never made it here, if it was released. ((Ed--sigh, yes, again --Rumor persists that TESB and E.T. will be released on videotape sometime this year but so far none of the video stores in Dallas has a concrete date. Perhaps it will show up by the time SE#4 sees print!))

My thanks to Shaun Dawkins and Michael Stubbington for the interview with Michael Carter. I found the whole piece very interesting. I think it says a lot for LFL that they are so careful about the safety of their actors that they even had an optician on the set. When you think of some of the recent incidents involving SFX, you realize many filmmakers could benefit from Lucas' example, also people involved in music videos and commercials (I'm thinking of Michael Jackson's Pepsi burn and Ozzie Osbourne's ridiculous accident). Michael Carter did a wonderful job in bringing Bib Fortuna to life and I enjoyed hearing from Mr. Carter.

Terri Black's article on "The Symbolism of Black and White in Star Wars" was very well-written and fascinating. I enjoyed it and hope to read more of her ideas. She came up

with some amazing insights.

To Chris Jeffords: Liked your thoughts on New Alderaan. However, I don't see the Jedi as a strictly warrior or paramilitary order. Of course, The Word hasn't come down from Mount Lucas on this--so to each his own. My reason for thinking that Obi-Wan served as a general outside the order dates back to my first viewing of ANH and comes largely from Luke's reaction to hearing "that old wizard" called by the title of general. Luke sort of does a double take and (it seems to me) looks at Ben with a new and deeper respect. Luke was, at this point, hell-bent to get into the Academy. His reaction to Ben's explanation of the Force was a sort of "sure--if you say so" look and he didn't seem that interested in hokey religions at that point. But he did seem impressed that this old man was once a general. I think he always liked Ben and I don't think he looked to him as a mentor 'til after Leia called him General Kenobi. I do agree with you that the Jedi would have some system of rank but the term "general" just doesn't fit in with my conception of them.

To Michelle Malkin: I liked your thought that Luke might have passed a test set by Yoda when he left Dagobah. I never thought of it that way but it is a possibility. I want to comment on something you asked in SE#2. You wondered why Luke's Jedi mind-trick didn't work on Jabba. In ANH, Obi-Wan said that "the Force can have a great influence on the weak-minded." Jabba is many things but he isn't weak. Therefore, Luke was not able to influence Jabba's thinking as he was able to do with Bib Fortuna.

To The Editor: Hey, I really like your idea about the Alliance forming a splinter government and a state of war continuing with the weakened Empire. Now, that could make for some fascinating stories. I really feel that the Empire is dead but I can still enjoy stories that take off in different directions.

To Barbara Tennison: Agree with your comments that only people who are "actively and consciously" using the Force can be recognized by other Force-users. It's the only explanation why Vader didn't

sense his kinship to Leia. And, I think, it would be especially easy, at this point in time, to perceive Force use. Force-users (if not Force-sensitives) are few and far between.

To Carole Regine: You make some good points about Obi-Wan. I liked your "a less patient student" would have rebelled against him. Made me realize how quickly Luke turned aside his anger and feelings of betrayal. Remember his "Ben, why didn't you tell me?" from TESB and the hurt that came through in that line? This scene with Obi-Wan shows Luke's maturity. He doesn't dwell on past injustices inflicted on him but immediately begins to deal with the problems of the present.

To Debbie Gilbert: You made a good point about Luke's calling out to Vader for help. This is another one of those things that is going to be argued over for years, I guess. But like you said, he was grasping for the only possible solution. I cannot see that Luke was asking Vader to sacrifice himself. It was only a call for help. I find no evil, selfish intent in this. It is a reaction to what is happening to him. In pain and fear, self-preservation takes over.

How many ultimately perceive a film (or book, play, any creative work) depends a lot on what you bring within yourself to that film, I suppose. Either it strikes a responsive note in you or it doesn't. For me, with my experiences past and present, ROTJ was a work of art. Perhaps one reason I enjoyed it so much is due to my short time in SW fandom. I only began reading SW fanfic six or eight months before ROTJ premiered. And although I'd always loved the Saga--well, I just wasn't involved in the intense analysis that is so much a part of media fandom. The only expectation I brought with me when I first saw JEDI was a terrible fear that either Han, Luke or Lando would be killed (I got this impression from an interview with Marquand). So I wasn't disappointed by anything--except for the over-abundance of "short help". I do admit to a certain feeling of bittersweet sadness at the end of the film. But I know it's because I've enjoyed these films so much and I just hate the idea that it's all over. (There are so many more

things I want to see with all of these characters.) And this feeling has been increased because Lucas left the fate of the other films up in the air. If he hadn't made all those depressing remarks about retiring we could be, even now, speculating on just who would be right for the part of Anakin and Obi-Wan. And who should play Mom. And will there be a Wookiee in this one. And...

((Editor's Note: Sorry to keep breaking in on you. I've heard a recent rumor that very early pre-production has now started on the first trilogy, specifically on ship design. Also, at a recent con, I saw an alleged "story line" on Chapter III, THE FALL OF THE REPUBLIC. There was an interesting scene in the first part of it involving Captain Antilles (remember him? 3PO's "former master"?), who was piloting a "small saucer-shaped freighter" and had with him a "ten-year-old Corellian cabin boy." Now, that really piqued my curiosity. I didn't read the whole story treatment, since I'd like to leave a little to the imagination, but this was about the fall of Anakin, the rise of Palpatine, and also included Lady Skywalker and Bail Organa! Very interesting material! Back to you...))

As for the question of Palpatine's training or lack of it...well, you're right in one respect. However, no one mentioned that Luke had a sister 'til the third film. I do think that if Palpatine were trained as a Jedi, he was lost to the Dark at a very early stage in his training. I don't think he ever became a fully-trained Jedi knight.

To Martie Benedict: So glad to read that you don't think Luke is tragic or evil. That line of reasoning is (as 3PO would say) quite beyond my capacity. As for Lucas' statement in the PBS special--I suppose this can be interpreted in different ways to lend support to different viewpoints. What GL said was, "In the end, I had a problem in the fight between Luke and his father of why he makes the final turn to the bad side of the Force...Luke makes the final turn to and tries to kill his father." He did say "to" but I felt he was using it to mean "toward" the Dark Side. Luke was very close to "Dark-

ness" at this point and would have been lost to it had he killed his father. But right at the edge, he realizes what's happening and makes the final rejection of the Dark Side. If Lucas (in the PBS special) was saying that Luke had turned to the bad side at this point, then why did Palpatine zap him? The Emperor comes down the steps nearly shivering with glee and says, "Now, fulfill your destiny and take your father's place at my side." And Luke says the bit about "I'll never turn to the Dark Side."

To Melody Corbett: About the interview with Marquand and your question about where does "the young Jedi Knight" come back from. In your letter, you said, "I thought the fight with Vader at the end of the film (TESB) had left him quite shaken." To me, this was what Luke (as Marquand's "young knight") was returning from. Can you imagine how devastating it would be to find out that the idealized father of your imagination turned out to be the supreme monster of the galaxy? To be able to come to terms with that knowledge was what the young knight returned from. And constitutes quite a bit of "positive spiritual change" in my book. I think his "self-imposed exile on Tatooine", working through all of this, would be dramatic and interesting. I think that perhaps part of "normal" Jedi training might include a period of isolation and introspection. (I don't think Luke's training could be called normal or routine--occurring as it does when the Jedi are "on the run" and in hiding.)

To Marcia Brin: I didn't understand two things you said in the last issue. How is it indicated in the films that you can't be one with the Force 'til you die? Yoda sure seemed one with the Force in TEB. Also, what do you mean when you say that only "three shades" care about Luke? All I see at the end of the film is a big party, with everyone happy and singing. What does anyone do that shows you that they don't care about Luke?

I think the reason we never hear Luke speak about the Force is simply because he's not teaching anyone about it, the way Obi-Wan and Yoda are when they talk about the Force.

I can't agree with your view

that Luke is treating Vader like a "piece of chopped liver". The reason he doesn't go to Vader at the time you mentioned is because he was just a tad otherwise occupied--namely, dealing with and getting fried by the Emperor.

As I've said before, I don't think Luke is asking Vader to sacrifice himself. And, according to the PBS special, this was the moment the whole trilogy aimed at. So, while it doesn't work for you, this moment and how Vader/Anakin and Luke responded to it was what the whole darn thing was about. Lucas didn't choose to have Luke act in a "questionable manner", as you propose in your letter.

In SE#2, you said, "The hero of the monomyth is ready to die if need be" and you cite many examples from the trilogy--none of them involving Luke. I can think of three times when Luke made the choice to die, if need be: over the Death Star in ANH; when he stepped off the catwalk in TEB; when he threw away his lightsaber before the Emperor in ROTJ. In your letter in #2, you seemed to think that because Han refused to beg Jabba for his life, it made him more courageous than Luke and more deserving to be the mythic hero. Well, granted, that was an admirable thing for Han to do. Very much in character and I loved it. But don't you think standing defenseless before Palpatine is as courageous as refusing to beg before Jabba?

Also in #2, you mentioned that the Alliance has divorced itself from Luke--that he was not given a job by the Alliance, that he merely tagged along with Han. Two things make this unacceptable to me. First, the same can be said of Leia. She is not given a job--she volunteers to go with Han, just as Luke does. Originally, Leia's change in position with the Alliance in JEDI bothered me. In ANH and TEB, Leia seemed to be one of the principal leaders of the Rebellion. I always thought she was in a position of great power. But in ROTJ, she seems to have no position at all. Well, perhaps each of the people we see in the briefing room is the top leader in their individual cells. That would explain Leia's apparent change in status. What we're seeing here is the innermost circle of Alliance leaders. They are all Very Important

Rebels and wouldn't be allowed on board Ackbar's command ship unless they were trusted implicitly (Luke included). Second, Luke is not ignored by the Alliance. He is the last remaining Jedi. He is fully-trained now--or very close to it. His responsibilities lie with restoring the Jedi and restoring the balance between the light and the dark. He has not been denied a position with the Alliance because of a lack of trust. His position with the Alliance is his status as Resident Jedi. After all, the Alliance has always been shown to revere the Jedi.

You have said several times that Luke has never put the bigger issues above his own self-interest. Well, of course, we simply don't see eye to eye on these matters. But I thought I'd just throw in a thought on the subject. Remember the scene in Ben's hut in ANH? Ben is asking Luke to go to Alderaan with him and Luke says he can't get involved. I've always loved that scene--the way Luke hesitates on the steps there, the music that accompanies that moment, the fact that, in a way, so much depends on this decision being made in this little hut on this out-of-the-way planet. Anyway, I have the impression that Luke was a kid who had never really defied his uncle in even a minor way. I don't think I'd want to cross Owen Lars. But have you thought what Luke would have faced when he got home to Owen and told him that he'd given the droids to Ben? (Ben, of all people!) Luke certainly knows what he's in for--he walks across to R2 and slaps the top of the droid and says, "How am I ever gonna explain all this?" But he knew how important the droids were and was willing to take the heat when he got home. Right or wrong--that's how the scene strikes me. (And forgive me if I'm re-hashing stuff you guys have been talking about for seven years. I'm one of the new kids on the block--so I don't know what's been said before.)

Almost all of your comments on ROTJ have been ones centering on some sort of "Han vs. Luke" theme, which I must admit, I don't understand at all. I like both characters and think they are equally important to the success of the Saga. Although

I agree with Lucas and others who have said that this is Luke's movie, that doesn't mean that I don't like Han Solo. Or that I don't appreciate Harrison Ford. I was very impressed with HF's portrayal--especially when Han comes out of carbon freeze. His eyes don't seem to focus at all and he really looks blind, which is not an easy thing to do. I've never seen blindness portrayed so well. I do wish we could have seen more of Solo but I wouldn't have wanted any of Luke's scenes cut. As I said before, I am a Hanfan and a Lukefan. For me at least, the SW universe is big enough for two heroes.

To Jean Stevenson: It hadn't occurred to me that Fisher's upper anatomy might have been taped (ouch!) because Leia was supposed to be younger than the actress. But I think you're right. And she does change from child to woman in these three films. I was surprised (and pleased) to see Leia's gentle, sort of maternal attitude toward Wicket.

Excuse me...but did you say that now Luke has a "struggle to face, a greatness to achieve"? I thought that was what he was doing in these three films.

I agree completely with Carole Regine's idea that Han might commit adultery--it is a definite possibility and doesn't mean that Han is evil. First of all--just for the sake of discussion--how do we know that's not Standard Operating Procedure in that other galaxy? Our concepts and standards are not necessarily the ones Our Heroes would have. And, secondly, I have a real problem seeing Han settling down and happily going off to the office everyday. And, folks, please--I'm not saying this to put Han down. I like him the way he's shown in the films. I know he has committed himself to Leia, the Rebellion, his friends. And I'm glad he and Leia ended up together at the end of JEDI. But I'm talking about years down the road from Endor. Don't you think space and the Falcon might call to him at times? Could anyone who has lived a thousand adventures be forever content with routine? Could anyone who has "flown from one side of the galaxy to the other" be happy forever on one planet?

This does not mean that I am opposed to the idea that Han

and Leia might live Happily Ever After. I can see that as a possibility. But I have to take into account the man I see on the screen. And I think that the adventurous Corellian spacer I see might not be content to be planet-bound. Doesn't mean they can't work things out--but there might be struggles and compromises in their future.



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Wellll, SE keeps getting better and better. (Even if I DID get a copy that had another person's name on it...*snif*) ((Editor's Note: it's a long story--don't ask!)) At any rate, since we moved, and I didn't have time to answer the last ish, I'd better fall to, since I have two ishes to comment upon. (Stop sighing so dramatically, Cheree! I can hear you all the way to Grand Prairie! Which, for you faithful readers, is only a VERY long frog's hop from my ol' stomping grounds of Garland.) ((Ed's Note: For the hopelessly curious, Garland is directly to the northeast of Dallas; Grand Prairie is directly to the west of Dallas.)) So quit talkin' and hoe in, Jenni!

Regarding SE#2:

To Karen Osman--your comment about the "Tricky Dicky of the spaceways" had me howling! And, to make me sad, I find myself agreeing with you. So much, in fact, that I've started this story about Obi-Wan and actually HOW he got Luke to Tatooine... uh, better not go any further; don't want to give it away.

Speaking of giving away... there's been some talk in fandom about people "lifting" certain terms from other writers, as if those writers had a copyright on the word! Hate to tell you,

folks, but we be fine ones to talk of "lifting"! If this rule applied, then there'd be NO SW zines. As an example--and I'm not in any way swinging the cudgel at Maggie Nowakowska, since she's made no comments about this--is the word "enclave." It is NOT stealing to use a word that someone else happens to use, as well! Unfortunately, some people have to try and smudge other's reputations as honest persons over such trivia as this! C'mon, folks...as I said earlier, if we couldn't use the same words for some things, then pretty soon--say a few centuries back--people would have run out of words to write WITH. Not to mention that "Corellian" would be banned, as would "Jedi" and "Princess". Genug!!

Carole Regine--I agree with you about Luke's flirtation with the Dark being somewhat anticlimactic. (Well, maybe that isn't the right word...how about brief?) He dipped his foot in the water, found it cold, and shivered, when I was expecting an all-out plunge. But then, ROTJ was George's movie, not mine and I went into the thing knowing that some of the things that I wanted to see I wouldn't. It just wasn't possible for him to please EVERYBODY! For that same reason, I don't feel that ROTJ "spoiled" things for everyone. Hooray for alternate universes, where we can type to our heart's content on what we would have liked to see, whether we liked the movie or not.

Marcia Brin: Oh, Marcia, I can't stand it when you kick me and kiss me--all in the same paragraph, too! I'm frabjous that you liked my characterization of the blond bombshell, but...!!! (Watch Jenni's lip quiver at the nasty things impinged upon Luke's black-clad bod. Lip quivers don't work, huh? How about some hair-pulling and jumping about?) Seriously, it truly makes me HURT to know that all you see in Luke from ROTJ is Darkness. Yes, he's arrogant. But Han's arrogant--and nobody seems to mind that. And Luke's arrogance--as well as Han's--is one born of love and the will to succeed. Is that really all that wrong? Ghads, I could spend the next eon fencing about this, but I don't want to make Cheree ill. Just please, give the guy the same break you would Han. Luke

is HUMAN. Give him the consideration that he will sometimes act as such. I mean, how many of us have really, REALLY enjoyed, at one time in our lives, getting ahead of the crowd who's always thought of us as the kids who won't ever get their heads out of the clouds. Han's statement to Chewie was words to that effect--"Luke can't even take care of himself, much less rescue anybody". If you'd had to hear stuff like that, even in gentle teasing, I bet you'd jump at the chance to prove yourself--and enjoy it, too! Ah, here I go again--and I promised not to get worked up. Well, it's too late--I AM WORKED UP!! You speak of the rite of passage from child to adult, which IS shown in the Saga. Just because Luke is a mature adult doesn't mean that he can't show a few flaws. ESPECIALLY with his upbringing--that of work and little show of love. Luke seems, to me, to have been an emotionally-starved person in his childhood. I'm sure Beru and Owen loved him, but it was obviously difficult for Owen to show it. He's been taught all his life to believe in only that which he can see and touch--even the man he admires and is close to--Han--tells him so. And you wonder why he talks back to the older Jedi? Or why he seems distant? A protective shell sometimes can be the only help. Now, let's find someone to crack that shell!! Ahem. I'm better now.

Now, on to SE#3. Terri's article on black and white I found very true-to-form and applicable. I'd often had those same thoughts myself, and it's nice to see that another person thinks along those lines.

Mary Urhausen: I always get the biggest kicks outta your stuff, and now I got a kick from your LoC! The SPPHSIS [the Society for the Prevention of the Promulgation of Han Solo as Intergalactic Superstud]--count me in as a charter member! I get REALLY tired of the "Han Solo as the greatest lay in the galaxy" stories. Okay, I'll bet he's pretty good--but NOBODY'S THAT great! This rumor about Corellians and their penchant to jump ANYTHING is really a scream! And I think we should the SFPOLSAGWP (The Society for Prevention of Luke Skywalker as Galaxy-Wide Poppa!). And yes, I've also had the agony of "why him--and not

ME?!" Aww, it just isn't fair! Biggs is right, I'll NEVER get to write a SW novel. Alas, I'd probably put too much mental agony, sax and violins for Lucasfilm's taste.

Luke's isolation (and this touches, a bit, what I said to Marcia above) in ROTJ is sometimes heartbreaking. He's such a bundle of moodiness, anyway--the guy desperately needs someone to tickle him until he wets his pants! Mark Hamill once mentioned that Luke was a guy who took things too seriously--and he is. The one thing that makes me want to sit down and bawl sometimes is that Luke IS alone. There is NO ONE that he can talk to on a one-to-one level. With Han--Han's not Jedi. Leia will be a student, it's presumed; I can't truly see her being a Jedi like Luke, anyway. Her path lies along a different one than Luke's. And as to the 3 stooges (who first thought up that term? It's a scream!), hey, they might always be with Luke, but they're dead. It would be great if he could find someone, man or woman, to be with and be equals with. Well, I guess it's up to us, folks. The aloof hero isn't a favorite with me. It's saddening.

Along the same train of thought--people are grouching about the lack of characterization--well, they only had two hours and, goody--that leaves more for us!!!

Carole Regine: A hatred born of love...yes. How many times have we heard of mothers lifting cars to save their children? And, because of this, IS the Dark Side a necessarily "evil" thing? I tend towards the theory that Bev Lorenstein put across, and use it in my own writing--that the Light Side and Dark Side of themselves aren't "evil" or "good". But, when there's an imbalance, whoa! Sometimes the emotions, the Dark Side's manifestation, are appropriate, sometimes the Light, with its calm is the best. Luke with the Dark dominating his destiny...that was an ambiguous statement that Yoda made. Truly, everyone has the Dark and the Light within them, and hopefully maintain a balance. Is it the balance upset that makes the "turn"? And to be dominated by the Dark--truly, Luke is governed by his emotions, but is this always bad? Luke is a "gut-

doer", as opposed to a sage, but he wouldn't be Luke otherwise. I'm a gut-doer myself, so my viewpoint towards that is naturally more understanding. (Maybe this also helps answer Martie Benedict's questions on this.)

Terri Black: TENNIS SHOE! WHERE??!!

Jean Stevenson: Uh, hate to disagree, but it was made quite clear by Ben that Luke should KILL Vader. Remember--"I can't kill my own father!" "Then the Emperor has already won."

And back to Marcia, again. And, I'll be switched--we AGREE on something! As I referred to earlier, I think the idea of Luke impregnating the galaxy IS a bit flooring (as well as hilarious!). Everything in Luke's makeup shows that he IS NOT a casual person--this would be way out of character for him, in my opinion.

Chewbubble? What does he do when it pops? Talk about a sticky mess! Or does he use Hubba-Bubba *snicker*. ((Big bubbles--no trouble!)) And in-law problems--priceless!

The article about the cancer patient really made me think. How many times in the past three years have I gotten together with friends and joked about "I refuse to die before the third part!" At least this little boy got his wish and I think it was wonderful of Lucasfilm to grant him that chance to see it.

Now, a special announcement to all non-media-fen who deign to look down their lofty noses at us.

Yes, we are a people obsessed.

This came to me for no apparent reason while I was brushing my teeth with my Luke Skywalker toothbrush (which has inspired many off-color jokes in our household!). I looked at my bathroom, which has Vader shampoo perched on the toilet (heavens, no! I don't USE it--it's saved for my collection. It does funny things to my hair, anyway...), at my closet full of costumes--and not all of them for dancing, the virtual vast quantities of cash I've spent for all this tomfoolery, and thought, "boy, am I weird!"

Ain't it great?

((Editor's Note: Not to mention the personalized license plates we have on our cars--"HAN FAN" and "LUKE FN"--we'll leave it up to the readers to guess who has which one!))



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I really liked Terri Black's essay on color symbology in the Saga and I essentially agree with everything she said. The only place that I would draw a different conclusion is to the fact that Luke has completely overcome his inner conflict at the end although I do agree with Terri that he seems to have come through his darkest period and now has sighted the doorway that leads to the light.

Michelle Malkin seems to have taken the meaning of what I was saying about the alchemic process in the wrong direction. Although I tried to make myself really clear, some of the misinterpretation might have been due to my inability to express the concepts. Anyway, if it was my fault, I apologize. I did not say that Luke didn't pass this test (the alchemic transformation). Quite frankly, I see no place in these films where Luke participated in the ascending steps of this process. Now, like his training, the alchemic process might have happened off screen, but in the existing films this does not take place as far as I can tell. (By the way, I think that Luke's tests are what we are seeing all the way through JEDI.)

Mickey, you say that Han could not have survived the fire. I certainly agree with the fact that that seems to be

an impossibility, but according to the script (from THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK NOTEBOOK, p. 107), that is exactly what happened, and I think that is the whole point. On a fairy tale level, this heat, fire, burning is often a test to determine a hero, and when this test does happen, he is the one who can surmount intact such an ordeal. In this story, we have examples of other characters facing this trial and we can see how it affects them: Owen and Beru are completely destroyed; according to George Lucas in his first ROLLING STONE interview, Darth Vader fell into a volcano, and we can see the consequences of that; and you yourself point out that Luke is crying out in pain at the results of the Emperor's deadly rays (although I'm not at all sure if what the Emperor is emitting is related to heat or fire).

If I shift my thinking from a magic/fairy tale mode to a realistic scientific plane, and then assume that it is not the fire that Han survives, I am left with the freezing process, still an unpleasant prospect. (I'm pretty sure that I wouldn't survive this one either.) We are still faced with examples of what the effects of freezing do to characters in this galaxy: the warning against being caught on Hoth's Ice Plains after dark; the expiration of the Taun-taun; the effects on Luke in the same situation. Perhaps you mean flash-freezing followed by the heat. I think that would serve to crystallize the body and in that case that crash after he (Han) is pushed over by the Ugnaughts sure leads me to believe that instead of one fried Corellian to retrieve, Leia would now be able to scoop up the pieces. That is, if the heat that came after the freezing had not already thawed him out. (What a mess!) Baked Alaska, anyone?

Though I suppose it's possible, I find it hard to conceive of this process as being carried out on anything other than a magic or fairy tale level (and Lucas did say he was telling a fairy tale). And this test does seem to fit into that motif, as does the "belly of the whale" situation, one which is covered in great detail in Campbell's HERO WITH A THOUSAND FACES. As such, Han's actions with the blaster are indeed quite appropriate: he is using

his weapon to gain knowledge or confirmation of what he suspects. This, once again, is not a realistic, mundane set-up. If it were, our star warriors would be floating all over the slug's tummy once they exited the Falcon (not to mention that Han's breath mask comes off before he re-enters the safety of his beloved ship--great lungs). This plus the successful navigation of the asteroid field (passing the symplegades, the clashing rocks--yet another hero test) are but two more explicit myth/fairy tale motifs. I'm certainly not saying that you must see the story on this level, but in my piece on alchemy I was addressing this interpretation. Whether Mr. Lucas was utilizing these concepts I have no idea, but on this level, these elements do exist and they seem to work beautifully.

Once again, by way of apology, I must say that in identifying Chewie as Han's animal nature, I was applying the concept of fairy tale, and in this realm that certainly would be his function along with animal protector and helper. That does not mean I would ever entertain the idea of lessening or denigrating his role as individual, friend and intelligent being. Nor would I view or want him treated with less than respect. So I know you will agree with and understand my position of 3PO.

In SKYWALKING, Lucas says the robots were put in the Saga to make a statement about discrimination, and Chewbacca and the robots were used to show that no matter how odd or different people seem, they can be true and faithful friends. In the third trailer for JEDI this view was again stated as it was during the narrative portion of the CBS showing on STAR WARS.

Yet in JEDI, we have 3PO subjected to slavery without his prior knowledge or his willing consent. 3PO expressed shock that Luke could do such a thing to him. And you know what? He had every right to feel this way.

In response to Marcia Brin's saying that Lucas never said Luke was his alter-ego, Mickey says that in a PREVUE/MEDIASCENE interview Lucas stated he was identifying with Luke. Mickey is right. But my question is which Luke was he identifying with? Was it the young man we

see in the films? Or was it a 40-year-old general (in SKYWALKING I see the age of that general is 60)? Or maybe it was a young girl off to find her brother. Each of these statements about Luke's identity I had seen before the one Mickey speaks of. I'm not sure about Marcia, but I had not applied the same interpretation that Mickey seems to have. Instead, I assumed that Lucas' identification with Luke went hand in hand with whichever Luke was created first or whichever Luke he was identifying with at the time.

To make matters worse, all of the Han Solo books were printed with the title "From the Adventures of Luke Skywalker", a character not even alluded to within the books themselves. And then there was the statement in TIME magazine (July 1980) that in STAR WARS Luke was his alter ego but that now in EMPIRE that alter-ego character had shifted to Yoda. In fact, Gerald Clarke, the interviewer, indicates that Lucas' entire philosophy of the Force is voiced by this character. That seems to be confirmed by Lucas' statement on the PBS special on the making of JEDI and in an interview that ran in FAMILY magazine.

Now, I must say that the Clarke statement is not a direct quote of Lucas, and that, I think, is very significant. I believe the reason that most of the public thinks of Luke as the sole alter-ego is because of assumptions made by reporters and not based on statements Mr. Lucas himself made. To me, the statement that most explicitly seems to ring true on this matter is that they all play a part of his (Lucas') makeup (from the paperback about the making of EMPIRE), and this to me is the one that fits, mainly because it seems that at some point in the telling, indeed, virtually every character in the Saga has played this role. In reference to the July 1983 TIME magazine article Mickey talks about (Lucas saying that there is a great deal of himself in the story), once again it is the interviewer's assumption that Luke/Mark Hamill is that specific alter-ego (although I think I do agree that to a great measure, he is; I rather suspect that Lucas also has his own darkness to work out as do we all).

As to Mr. Ford's statement, I would be most careful in put-

ting a literal interpretation on this fellow's words. The gentleman seems to have the ability to be very cryptic and on some points quite contradictory. On that same subject (his position in the films) in an interview that I have on tape (that was conducted with Mr. Ford when he was plugging BLADE RUNNER), he was asked about his concerns about playing Indiana Jones. He indicated that one of the problems was to draw a distinction between the two characters (Han and Indy) because there were surface similarities and because "they had the same kind of place in the film." (Oh, jinkies!)

Onward. In STAR WARS we have an Obi-Wan who tells Luke that the blue saber that he takes from his trunk is one his father wanted him to have when he was old enough. Yet the person who claims the Obi-Wan identity in JEDI tells Luke that he (Luke) and his twin sister had been hidden from their father. Indeed, even the fact of their conception must have been concealed to keep this knowledge from Anakin and the Emperor. But that means he left a saber for--a son he didn't know he had. Huh?

Speaking of sabers, I was wondering if there might be an analogous relationship to these weapons and the rings of power in the Tolkien books. I remember Gary Kurtz at Noreascon in Boston after EMPIRE opened being asked if Vader really was Luke's father. His answer was, if I recall correctly, just remember that Vader says this at the same time that Luke loses his saber. Is it possible that that "good" blue saber was a protection for Luke against the dark and that the point that he lost it was when the dark/Emperor could make its/his inroads? And conversely at the point that Vader loses his evil/red saber in JEDI is there a chance offered for the good/Anakin to re-emerge? Just a thought.

Bev Lorenstein points out that Lucas' own stated purpose in creating SW was to "impart religious and/or psychological morality standards" and Luke was the central character. On the morality issue, I couldn't agree with her more. That is certainly what I expected; and I also expected this body of work to be stated in such a way as to be clearly understood by

even his very youngest audience. (They are the ones he said that his message was primarily aimed at.)

It seems that this is not the case. If fandom (I assume a fairly rational group of adults) can't agree on Luke's behavior, it's beyond me how an adolescent should be able to figure out the finer points of Luke's actions. Within this letterzine alone the opinions seem to run from one pole to the other--and hit every point in between. This seems to add up to a very ambiguous character, not a clear cut, positive role model.

Bev indicates that, because Luke is the central character and everything is fine at the film's end, Luke must be doing fine. Also, I suppose, that with that, one should assume that he is a good character for children to identify with. I say please justify to me, in a way that a seven-year-old can understand, Luke's treatment of 3PO.

The SW films do seem to offer many lessons and on many levels. I think one of the lessons offered in the Saga (by example) is how to treat friends and that one of the determinations as to whether you have learned those lessons and passed those tests is exactly in how you do treat those friends.

I think Luke's true moment of redemption will come not only when he makes atonement with the powerful, important and misunderstood Darth, but when he can also make atonement with the insignificant, irritating and faithful 3PO. For Luke there is one scene I would dearly love to have seen--for his sake and for my own--one that for me would have taken much of the taint of ambiguity away from his destiny. That scene would have shown Luke offering his apology to 3PO.

As the film ends now, with Luke's unresolved problems, it is not the moral tale I would want or maybe it's just not the simple happy conclusion I would desire. I don't know.

I do hope Mr. Lucas will address this problem, because at this point, Luke's moral victory is not plainly evident to me although I suspect that there are many seven- and eight-year olds out there much brighter than I am. I also think that for most of us kids, the message is more than a little bit cloudy.

But just remember, as Tim Blaes points out, the opera's not over till the fat lady sings.



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April 2, 1984

The group of fans who some of us understandably refer to as the "Church of Ford" would have us believe that George Lucas is as much in love with Han Solo/Harrison Ford as they are, and--the inevitable corollary--that he hates Luke Skywalker as much as they do. They have taken the SW saga and distorted so many basic elements in it to make the story "fit" into the mold they want it to be. They have twisted and chopped and selected and dismissed the story beyond recognition, so that their version of what we saw on screen bears almost no resemblance to what actually went on screen and what George himself created. They have become so obsessed with one character/actor that he is all they see behind everything in the SW story. I can't think of a similar instance where devotion to a character/actor has been taken to such an extreme so that the most basic concepts in the story itself are denied. I certainly do not include the more objective Han fans who may not be particularly interested in the character of Luke. I was one once (before JEDI). Now I love both of them. I refer to a small group who have a bizarre insecurity about the character they love, for they seem to feel Han has no value as Lucas presents him, that he simply has

to be the central hero and, of course, a Jedi. Oh, yes, but then they use the excuse that Lucas himself sees things as they do and that he's been playing a hoax on all of us. Actually, their premises are great for alternate story ideas but as "canon"? Can someone explain this phenomenon to me? Why have they lost all their objectivity? It's clear that their assertions about the saga are based solely on this worship of Solo/Ford. It's the most bizarre thing I've ever run across in any fandom and I've been a fan for 11 years. Why must they rewrite Lucas (under the guise of invoking his authority, of course), ignore his obvious intent and deliberately fish for rotten things to say about his hero simply because they don't like him? The simple fact is, NO ONE, absolutely NO ordinary human being or even a heroic fictional character could ever fulfill their demands for Luke. The reason this is so is due to the fact that no matter what Luke does, says, would do or say, doesn't do or say, did so or say, they will always twist some venomous criticism out of it. He could be the most saintly character ever created and they would still hate him. The reason is very simple: he's not Han, which to them is the be-all and end-all of the SW universe. There were some good, concrete examples last issue of the weakness in their arguments which prove their basic prejudice and lack of logic. Last issue's article by Jean Stevenson has the following quote: "If Luke succeeds in confronting his father and becoming a Jedi, then the 'other' is a piece of slipshod dramatic folderol." You don't have to be a logician to notice the obvious flaw in that statement. The conclusion simply is not imbedded in the premise and therefore there is no necessity which calls for it. Many of their arguments are based on sweeping assumptions that can be easily punctured by anyone. This one in particular is an example of the "slippery slope" argument which calls for a leap in believability. I thought everyone by now realized that you simply can't hold Lucas to every line in his films because of the many contradictions within them. Lucas is a simple storyteller, no more, no less, with some good, fun ideas.

But you can't take his scripts for the SW films so seriously that you search for hidden meanings to fit some premise of your own. You can explore ideas and postulate, certainly, but with a healthy understanding that it's your own theorizing and not Lucas'. If anyone of us pointed out all the contradictions and holes in the SW saga to him, he'd probably shrug and say "so what?" Another good example of a deliberate twisting of what's on screen (so much so that you have to strain to understand it) is Marcia Brin's contention that Luke's conclusion about Leia's sibling relationship to him is based on his desire to assuage his pride and jealousy over her choosing Han and not him. My only reaction to that is "Wha...?" There is positively NOTHING on screen that gives any serious validity to that, so it's obviously a deliberate misinterpretation. As I said, everything this character does or says is distorted to fit a preconceived prejudice. One other example concerns Melody Corbett's involved speculations on one simple, random quote made by Marquand. Her arguments are riddled with conveniently dismissed possibilities and unconvincing conclusions. But that's not important, because the entire reading of the quote is based on one easily challenged assumption: that Marquand was talking about "the other", as Melody assumed. Once you say "Maybe he wasn't talking about the 'other'," you can just ignore the rest of the letter. One other questionable assumption in her letter is her statement that the "other" was to "complete the task that Luke was being groomed for." Possibly. This one has a little more basis than the others but it can still be challenged. I have yet to read a convincing, objective argument that supports all these "Evil Luke" statements. I'm still waiting. I'm open to persuasion but I'll only believe someone who's not a rabid Han fan, who hasn't developed some sort of "vested interest" in destroying Luke and making Han out to be something he clearly has not been shown to be by anyone.

I can't understand the objections to Luke's screams. I was eminently glad Lucas included that because it's an extremely powerful dramatic moment

(which seems to be why he put it in). I've seen ROTJ 16 times and each time, without fail, I and the audience around me react --vocally and physically--to his cries of pain. We're meant to feel it with him and that was definitely the effect. Lucas has set up an extremely difficult situation for his hero. It's a wonder Luke just doesn't chuck it all and go off somewhere alone to go quietly nuts. He has such conflicting information and feelings within and around him that any lesser hero would've gone permanently to the dark side long before. I don't understand why certain fans refuse to let Luke be human. They are guilty of a genuine lack of sensitivity to the powerful drama Lucas has set up and to the character. They have unreasonable, inflexible, super-human expectations of Luke. Why is it all right for Han to scream in TESB (and he, "of course," has the Force, right?) and not Luke? Just because he knows there's a "Jedi after-life", and just because he's a Jedi (or almost one) doesn't mean he's suddenly become totally fearless. I hope not. Otherwise, Jedis are just too boring. Stop dredging up (and limiting the characters to) all these continuous fairy tale parallels, some of which work, some of which don't, to show some negative premise about Luke. There are as many, if not more, such parallels that easily refute any you can come up with.

To Mary Urhausen: You don't really believe that our complaints about JEDI will influence Lucas in any way about his future plans for SW, do you? He'll do whatever he damn well pleases, and I doubt he cares about what a few fans think. The mundanes give him plenty of profit just by themselves.

To Michelle Malkin: your letters are always a joy, lucid and reasonable. I agree with practically everything you say. I can't think of anything you've written that I don't. You know, I think the Church of Ford people must walk out of the theater when Luke attacks Vader and so they miss the ending of the scene, when he regains control. That's the only explanation I can come up with for their strange ignorance of Lucas' obvious statement at the end--that Luke stopped himself, making him a greater individual than his

father.

To Barbara Tennison: another rational voice. Your point about Leia is good. I'm sick and tired of Leia being referred to as a passive reward. Some fans analyze Luke and Leia so one-dimensionally I wonder why they're SW fans. Your comments on Lucas were perfect.

Here is a can of worms: I found the Ewoks and their civilization (and the backhanded condescension of their presentation) somewhat racist on Lucas' part. On the recent PBS special, Lucas said that the Ewoks originated from an idea he had for a Vietnam film centered around the concept of a "weak," "primitive" people beating a mighty modern power. Gee. How enlightened of Lucas to replace the Vietnamese people with cuddly, carnivorous teddy bears. The Third World was portrayed in a very prejudiced way in RAIDERS as well. But that's nothing new in American films.

To Terri Black: Luke does not attack Vader with "blood-lust". In the PBS special, Lucas mentioned the difficulty he had in finding a reason for Luke's "final turn" to the dark side. He said it took him a while but he finally hit upon Luke's feelings for Leia (whether brotherly or otherwise, he probably meant "protective") and for Vader to exploit that. That is his major weakness, apparently, which makes him lose control. It wasn't mindless lust for blood, but fierce protectiveness. There's no basis in the contention that Luke at that point felt hatred. At that moment Luke is not thinking rationally. All he is thinking about is destroying the threat to Leia. Whether it's hatred or love or any other emotion involved simply does not enter into it, except his deep emotions for Leia, not against Vader. By the way, I wonder if Ben or Yoda ever hated Vader or the Emperor, hmm? You can't clinically pick apart a person's feelings and motives in a moment like that, people. Even Jedis experience profound rage. They're not saints.

To Tim Blaes: no, one person need not take control. What's wrong with planetary governments taking over their own jurisdictions? You sound like you want another dictatorship again.

One question about Han: if he's such a Force-sensitive, why

was he wrong about his feelings concerning the Falcon?

By the way, this past November I picked up a script outline at a con by a John L. Flynn called STAR WARS: FALL OF THE REPUBLIC (that looks official). Further down on the red cover, it says "Adapted from Part 1: 'The Adventures of Obi-Wan Kenobi', The Journal of the Whills by George Lucas." It is described as a screen treatment. It has several interesting things in it, including the story of how Ben hid Leia and Luke. Their mother appears, as does a ten-year-old Corellian cabin boy of Captain Antilles, the Monastic Order of the Sith who help Anakin live again as Vader, Mon Mothma, Bail Organa, something called the Merchants Guild and a lot of other fascinating things, including the birth of the twins and Palpatine's attempts to kill all newborn infants a la King Herod. Anyone else besides me see this? If anyone is interested in a xerox copy, SASE me and I'll give you the details.

Marcia Brin: you can invoke Lucas' name all you want to add authority to your unproven assertions but it changes nothing. You can claim that you're not tearing down one character to upgrade another, but it's clear to me that that's what you're doing. You may want to believe desperately that Lucas has indeed shown Luke to be a worm, but, again, your desire changes nothing. And yes, Han is the most mysterious character, in that we know little about him. Instead of putting some great weight on this fact, it's much easier to see that apparently Lucas doesn't find him important enough to show us his past as much as Luke or Leia.

This letter has been pretty aggressive and forthright, but before people say I've made personal attacks, get the term straight. I have attacked the arguments, not the people. There's a distinct difference.

One last point about the Church of Ford before I close, and this is probably the most important: Even if George Lucas himself were to stand in front of them and say that Luke Skywalker is the central character, the main hero, that he did not go down the Dark Side permanently, that he regained control, that his motives and feelings were good ones, that Leia is

indeed his sister and the "other," and that Han is not the "hidden hero" or "hidden god" or whatever theory they've come up with, in absolute, unequivocal, unarguable terms, they would (a) say he's stupid and doesn't know how to do things right; (b) tell him he's totally wrong, that they know better; (c) come up with some way to again twist his words and tell us he didn't really mean what we understood him to mean but something more cryptic, implying as they are now that Lucas is a trickster, a liar or both; or (d) all of the above. Which is why logical, reasonable debate is futile. And emotional debate is even worse. You simply can't open firmly closed minds. The rest of us--at least I am--are pretty open to serious speculations about Luke's imperfections and Han's possible greater role in the saga but not to the extremes this group of people has taken them.



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I am new to fan fiction, having discovered it about 4 months ago, and this issue of SOUTHERN ENCLAVE (#3) is my very first experience with a letterzine. I am not a writer and I hesitated in writing this, my very first letter to a letterzine, because I recognized almost all of the names of the contributors to SE#3 as authors and/or editors of various fanzines. I realize that writers of fan fiction are not professionals, but many of the stories and poems they write are quite good, so I'm a little nervous about writing this, since I am

not very good with words. However, I felt compelled to write anyway to express my shock and dismay at the amount of anti-Luke sentiment that seems to be present among "fans" of STAR WARS. There are so many fanzines and stories devoted to Han Solo, and Luke is often either not mentioned at all, is a very secondary character, or is portrayed as a weak, helpless, unstable, naive farm-boy with no potential for ever growing up. Han Solo comes across in most stories and comments as the Force's gift to the Galaxy. I would be happy to just sit back quietly and let others have their fun. After all, I like Han Solo, too. He's not my favorite character, but he's handsome and courageous, and he's always good for a laugh in a tense situation. What bothers me, and what I can't ignore, is that many people are not content to just portray Han Solo as the ultimate hero, perfect man, and near-god; they degrade and ridicule the character of Luke Skywalker at the same time. This is unfair and unnecessary.

First of all, I really don't understand how anyone can question who the hero of the STAR WARS films is. Ask any 6 year old. He/she knows who the hero is. Six-year-olds will tell you without hesitation that it's Luke Skywalker. If you ask them why, they'll tell you in the simple words of children, "...because he's good, he tries to help people, and he fights the bad Darth Vader." George Lucas knows what he's doing. His moral message is clear to little ones. I know. I have taught first graders for six years. It was because of my first graders and their enthusiasm for STAR WARS that I went to see the movie in the first place (April, 1978), and I've been hooked ever since. If you ask little children to name their favorite characters from STAR WARS, Luke Skywalker is far and away the number one choice, followed by Wicket, Princess Leia, Artoo-Detoo, and Han Solo. Small children have no difficulty accepting Luke Skywalker as the hero of the STAR WARS films. Why do adults?

I am also puzzled as to why some fans think that Luke has turned to the dark side of the Force at the end of RETURN OF THE JEDI. It's true that he nearly fell when he fought Vader

in anger because of his love and concern for Leia, but he did throw away his sword. I feel his declaration, "I'll never turn to the dark side. You have failed, Your Highness. I am a Jedi..." was exactly that--a declaration that he had finally passed his test and was indeed a Jedi. Remember that Yoda told him that only one thing remained before he was officially a Jedi: "You must confront Vader." By the end of ROTJ, he had done that and he had faced his own dark side as well, and had renounced the darkness with his toss of the saber.

Another proof that Luke did not turn to the dark side is the very end of the film itself where the three Jedi--Yoda, Ben and Anakin Skywalker--appear to Luke and smile their approval. They certainly wouldn't be smiling if he had fallen to the dark side or were in danger of doing so! Anyone who maintains that Luke fell to the dark side of the Force at the end of ROTJ or that he appeared to be heading towards it either didn't see the same film I did or for some reason is trying to fool himself into believing he saw something that simply wasn't there. The fact is, Luke did indeed earn the title of Jedi Knight at the end of RETURN OF THE JEDI. My feeling is that people who claim that Luke has started down the dark path or is about to do so at the end of JEDI are not giving Luke the credit he deserves. Are these people denying Luke's victory over the dark side because their own hero, Han Solo, was not the "other" Jedi that so many seemed to feel he was? If Han can't be a Jedi, then Luke can't either--is this their attitude? If so, how childish! Are people really that petty? I totally agree with Ann Wortham who says, "I think it is extremely silly to postulate that Luke headed down the dark path as his father before him." As she pointed out, "...there is really nothing in ROTJ that points to Luke going bad. How could there be when he turns Darth Vader, the intergalactic bad guy, into a pussycat?"

I disagree with Marcia Brin and others who seem to feel that Luke has not yet made his "rites of passage." Personally, I was surprised when Yoda said that Luke still needed to face Vader again. I feel Luke did

enough to qualify as having passed his test already at the end of THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, when he jumped from the gantry on Bespin in order to free himself from Darth Vader and avoid the dark side of the Force. Luke knew that that jump could quite possibly result in his death, yet he was willing to take that chance rather than give in to his father's temptations. I don't feel that he should have had to face any further trials to prove that he was good enough or committed enough to be a Jedi. The fact that he was willing to sacrifice his life, if necessary, rather than embrace the dark side, should have been test enough. What more can you offer than your life? It's true that Luke's life was ultimately spared, but I'm sure he doubted that his chances were very good when he jumped rather than succumb to Vader and the darkness he represented. In my opinion, that willingness to sacrifice himself rather than become an instrument of evil like his father should have been enough. The Bible's Abraham didn't actually have to sacrifice his son, Isaac. His willingness to do so was enough to ensure that Abraham passed his personal test of loyalty and faith in God.

In addition, Luke Skywalker has gone through more other trials and suffered more losses than any other character through the three SW movies. Among other things, he has lost his home, his childhood family, his fairy-tale princess, his hand, a carefree youth, his Jedi teachers, his sainted image of his father, many friends to war, and to some degree, his faith in Ben Kenobi and his Jedi teachings. Yet he managed to remain a good, compassionate, caring, thoughtful human being despite all of these losses. Some examples are: (1) Although he has not yet resolved all of his own conflicts, he puts them aside temporarily to help his friend Han, and he is instrumental in executing Solo's release from Jabba the Hutt. (2) When he realizes that Vader knows that he is on Endor, he is worried not about himself, but about others! "As long as I remain, I'm endangering the group and our mission here." (3) In spite of all the evil things his father has done to the Alliance and to the Galaxy

and all of the personal pain that he has caused Luke physically and emotionally, Skywalker is still willing to risk his own life to try to turn Vader back to the good side. If all of these things were not enough to qualify him as having made his "rites of passage," then certainly tossing away his lightsaber and renouncing the darkness in this act and saving Darth Vader by turning him back to the good side of the Force should have. Hasn't Luke been through enough to prove his worthiness?

At this point I'd also like to comment that I agree with Terri Black and Debbie Gilbert that Luke's calling to Vader was not begging for his own life, but was making a last active effort to turn his father from the dark side. In helping Luke, Vader would return to the good side of the Force. This was something Luke seemed to want almost as much as life itself. After all, he was willing to take the risk of losing his life when he surrendered to Vader's troops knowing they would bring him before Vader. He was willing to take that risk on the outside chance that he could persuade his father to turn away from darkness and return to the Alliance with him. It makes sense then that as he realized he was dying, he would try one more time to reach his father and bring him back to the good side, so his death would not be in vain.

Also, Ms. Brin, what do you mean when you say regarding Luke, "I see a lot of loneliness ahead for him if he doesn't do some real fence-mending?" When I think of "fence-mending", I think of trying to correct wrongs done to others in order to get back into their good graces. What did Luke do to his friends in the Alliance that he needs to correct? With whom does he need to mend fences? I didn't see anything in any of the three films that leads me to believe that Luke needs to mend fences with anyone. Quite the contrary: he seems to be a popular, respected member of the Rebel Alliance. Do you think people are going to turn their backs on him now because he is Darth Vader's son? That's sheer nonsense, because they would also have to do the same to Leia, who is Vader's daughter. I didn't see too many

other people chatting with Han or hugging Leia either. In fact, the main characters basically interacted only with each other in ROTJ and there was very little interaction with less significant characters. The others were more background window dressing than anything else.

If you are referring to the fact that Luke is alone near the end of RETURN OF THE JEDI, it seems to me that this was more his choice than anyone else's. A lot has happened in a very short time and I think it's only natural that he would want to be alone with his thoughts for a while. For one thing, at the point in question, Luke has just left his father's funeral pyre and he doesn't seem to be quite certain about his father's fate. Was his father's final good act enough to save him? It is only after he sees the vision of Yoda, Ben and his father that he seems much happier and goes back with Leia to join his friends.

I do, however, agree with you about one thing, Marcia. I do feel that despite his friends in the Alliance and his close friends (Han, Chewie, Lando) and his new-found sister, Luke would still be somewhat lonely without a girl of his own. I hope George Lucas plans to have him find one in the future. I think it's about time his life held some happiness and laughter. He deserves it. I agree with Mary Urhausen that "Luke's story doesn't end with ROTJ. Considering the possibilities and responsibilities he had ahead of him, much of his story is just beginning." I'm sure that story is going to include reestablishing the Order of Jedi Knights and maybe Leia will be his first student, but I hope Luke's story will include finding a worthy mate as well.

That brings me to another point: My personal feeling is that while everyone in the universe of George Lucas has some measure of the Force, not everyone can learn to use it or become a Jedi. Now, of course, I could be very wrong about this and I don't have a whole lot of proof to back up my claim, but if anyone could become a Jedi, why didn't the Alliance have a school working non-stop to teach as many people as possible to become Jedi Knights? After all, Jedi skills can be rather useful

in a battle! The Alliance (or the Empire for that matter), could have won easily if lots of people in their ranks were Jedi Knights.

You might argue that they didn't have any teachers because no one seemed to know about Yoda but Ben Kenobi had trained at least one Jedi previously (and he started to teach Luke). He could have taught others before his death instead of living in retirement in the desert on Tatooine. Darth Vader had told Luke, "Come with me. I will complete your training," so he had some idea about how to teach, too. He could have set up an Imperial School of Fallen Jedi Knights. The fact that Kenobi and Vader didn't teach anyone else leads me to believe that the ability to use the Force is found in only a very few people at this time in George's universe and even less become Jedi. Kenobi and Vader didn't have any other students because there were no other students to teach.

When Ben says in TESB, "That boy is our last hope," Yoda says "No, there is another." He does not say there are 256,000 others, or 2,560 others, or 256 others, or 25 others or even 2 others. He simply says, "There is another." We find out in ROTJ that the "other" is Leia. Yet she is not a Jedi and has not yet had any training. Therefore, even she is only a possible Jedi. She has the Force, but she still needs to learn to use it and needs to pass her own personal test before she can be a Jedi. Yoda says to Luke, "When gone am I, the last of the Jedi will you be."

If everyone (or even many) had the potential to use the Force and become a Jedi, why was Luke such a prize for the Emperor? Why was he so anxious to have him?

Therefore, while the Force is present in all living things, it seems to me that at this particular time in the history of that galaxy far, far away, only 2 people (Luke and Leia) possess the Force strongly enough to be Jedi. (Remember that about the time of the twins' birth, most of the Jedi were murdered. Obi-Wan says, "Today the Jedi are all but extinct." Apparently, the amount of the Force a person possesses is hereditary, which explains why Luke and Leia have it. If others in the Galaxy were

strong with the Force, certainly Yoda would have known of them and trained them. Since he said there was only "another", I am assuming that Leia is the only one besides Luke capable of becoming a Jedi at this time, and that the other Jedi Knights of the Clone Wars must have died without leaving any heirs. ((Editor's Note: Or that their heirs, indeed probably their whole families, were murdered along with them in the Purge.))

If all this is so, then Luke and Leia are the only ones who can pass on the ability to become Force-users/Jedi to their offspring. This may be one reason why Lucas made Luke and Leia siblings in ROTJ (much to my chagrin!) instead of having the Prince (well, Jedi Knight, anyway) marry the Princess at the end of the fairy-tale and live "happily ever after." There is a possibility of more future Jedi being born with two couples (Leia & Han and Luke & another as yet unknown young lady) than with one (Luke & Leia--non-siblings, of course; let's keep this PG!). If each couple had 4 or 5 children, it could be the start of a new Enclave of Jedi Knights. (Someone wanted to know who the villain of the 3rd trilogy would be. Perhaps one of these 8 or 10 Solo or Skywalker children could fall to the dark side of the Force and be the possible future villain.)

By the way, I didn't get to read the comment about a Luke "free" to "share the Force" with hundreds of young women theory that some people made reference to in SE#3, but I'm assuming it was a joke. It would be totally out of character for Luke for one thing, and not exactly George Lucas' style either! ((Editor's Note: the postulation was first put forth by Susan Matthews in SE#2 as a way to repopulate the Jedi--have Luke impregnate as many women as possible, instead of having just one mate.))

I object to Martie Benedict classifying Luke as "boring." What makes you think Luke Skywalker is boring?! Just because a guy is good, dependable, compassionate, idealistic, trustworthy, caring and nice, not to mention good-looking, does not mean he's boring. Luke was always full of surprises even from the beginning. Who would think, for example, that a farmer would

know how to repair droids, pilot spaceships, and be interested in the rebellion and in joining the Academy? People who are surprising are not boring. Luke actively sought adventure and excitement all of his life as we know from Yoda's chiding him. People who seek adventure and excitement can't be too boring. Luke is also a risk taker. He was willing to barge into the Imperial detention center to rescue Leia. He was willing to delay the completion of his Jedi training in order to go to Bespin to help his friends. He was willing to risk facing Vader in order to try to bring him back to the good side of the Force. People who are risk takers are hardly boring! Luke is also spontaneous and resourceful and finds creative solutions to problems and difficult situations. In SW, he used his cable to swing himself and the Princess across the chasm on the Death Star. In TESB, he used his lightsaber and a hand-explosive to single handedly destroy an AT-AT, and in ROTJ, he "presented" Jabba the Hutt with the "gift" of his droids because he knew he would need them in his rescue of Han, and he hid his weapon in R2D2's dome because who would think to look for it there? People who are creative and spontaneous are rarely boring. In my opinion, if Luke Skywalker is "boring," then I say this galaxy (and any other galaxy for that matter) can use more "boring" men!

I do have one burning question that I would really be grateful to have someone answer for me. My question is: Why were Ben Kenobi and Yoda so anxious for Luke to face Darth Vader again? Both of them insisted that he needed to do so, yet it seems to me that they were knowingly sending him into a no-win situation. If he killed Vader, he would become like his father and fall to the dark side. If he gave in to his father or embraced the darkness, Vader would kill him. The only way that Luke could have lived and remained on the good side of the Force would have been if Luke had killed his father in self-defense. Even this was no solution for Luke. I doubt that he would have found it easy to live with himself knowing he had caused his father's death. Being a Jedi would have been no joy or victory for

him either if it had come at the expense of his father's death by his own hand.

Those were the only possibilities, yet Kenobi and Yoda said that Luke "must" face Vader. Why? And why did they want to send him on a seemingly hopeless mission? You would have thought that they would have demanded that he stay as far away from Vader as possible, knowing the possible outcome. Just what was Luke supposed to accomplish? I really wish that someone would explain to me why they wanted Luke to face Vader, because I really don't understand what it was that they wanted Luke to do! It seems to me that if Luke hadn't been right about his father (that there was good in him), that he either would have been dead, or on his way down the dark path, or he would have been a very unhappy Jedi Knight at the end of JEDI.

((Ed's Note: I don't think Ben and Yoda ever said that Luke was to kill Vader. Yoda said that he and the Emperor must be stopped ("on this all depends"). Someone had to make a confrontation and only another Jedi could confront Vader. Luke couldn't make that confrontation by running away. He had to face him. If Luke had stayed away, then Vader and the Emperor would have continued to grow stronger and stronger. Someone had to go into the dragon's lair and that someone was Luke.))

Well, I'm sorry I rambled on and on. If you read this whole letter, you have the patience of a Jedi! As I said at the beginning, I am no writer, and I can't express myself as eloquently as most of you can, but I really felt a need to respond to some of the negativity that I have seen directed towards the character of Luke, and to share some of my opinions about the trilogy. Luke does have his fans. We may be quieter than our Solo counterparts, but we are no less loyal! Walk the skies!

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Sometimes I wonder that we dare in a few words to contemplate a whole galaxy-worth of ideas and images and patterns. Which is what this letter is all about. Ideas, in no particular order, just to share. So...

Answering Chris Jeffords' query in SE#2: The English words to "Lapti Nek" can be made out partially from both the CBS making-of monsters special and the PBS SW-to-ROTJ making-of special. Unfortunately, both narrators (Fisher and Hamill) talk over the chorus, as can be seen from this incomplete transcript. The phonetic vowel sounds are correct. As to what the consonants and meaning are--"I know nothing."

Lapti Nek

My body's heat is rising.
My soul is synthesizing.
My lover man is coming',
So I'm shapin' up and
workin' out.
I feel my heart a-pumpin'.
My whole frame is thumpin'.
My fancy man is comin'.
I'm shapin' up and
workin' out.

(chorus)

So the people say
Fancy man (or Handsome man
or Han's the man)
[sing twice]
(Response is indistinct)
[sing twice]
Fancy man (or...)
Gotta move your body,
Gotta work your feet.
Start workin' out!

Well, that's all I've got to say on that.

SE in general continues to be a breeding ground for ideas that don't really answer anyone specifically. Such as, have you noticed how many times the words possible/impossible arise in SW? "More wealth than you can possibly imagine." "...more power than you can possibly imagine." "Impossible man!" "You ask the impossible." "The hyperdrive motivator has been damaged. It's impossible to go..." "I am your father." "That's impossible!" "He asks the impossible!" "But Master Luke, what magic? I couldn't possibly--"

Somebody mentioned that the only true story is on screen. And from a "certain point of view"?

I think Chris Jeffords' reviews of the Lando books are

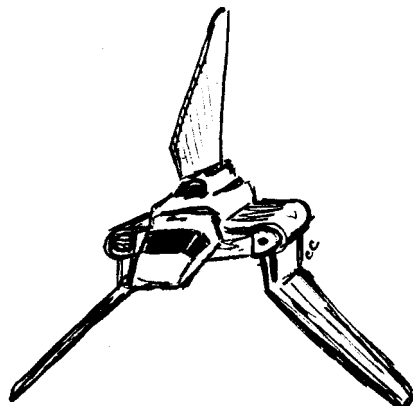
excellently done. I like the writing of these books better than the Solo ones, but I do have one question on Flamewind (reviewed in SE#3): Lando's cargo is made up of tinklewood rods and Wintemberry jellies and bollem hides, all three of which items I first encountered in the pages of James Schmitz' The Witches of Karres (Ace 1973). Is this a salute to a good writer (and if you like Wars, you will like Schmitz--Witches especially), or what?

Loved the conversation with Michael Carter (and am fascinated by Bib Fortuna himself), a well-written and presented piece of journalism. Cheree, watch out! Looks like you're taking on class. I don't know how long I'll be able to keep up with your level of quality. But keep going, please! ((Editor's Note: All the credit for that piece goes to Shaun Dawkins and Michael Stubbington, along with the photo of the "real" Michael Carter! Shaun just wrote and asked if I'd be interested in it and I pounced on it like a mynock on a power cable!))

I stood up and cheered every time someone addressed Ann Worthingam and the eternal "fans don't do anything worthy" problem. I recently read an interview in which Katherine Kurtz said she started by writing scripts for Star Trek. None of them ever got used (she didn't even say whether she submitted them), but she found the experience invaluable for learning to write catchy, moving dialogue and detailing plots that didn't get hung up in the rafters.

Back to the movie per se. The really interesting thing about Leia's lack of emotion in the walkway scene with Luke (notice how when she's freeing Han and talking to Luke here, there is bright moonlight--a woman's time of strongest magic?) is that it's followed immediately by the scene with Han in which she finally gets to break down and be human. She even gets a close-up. And you know, the man has to be besotted or he doesn't care that his lady love looks a lot worse for a long and exhausting day capped by emotion-ripping revelations. Or he can't see her through the mist.

That brings back a brace of questions I had way-back-when that haven't been answered so far. How come the seeming se-



condary male is the romantic lead and how come the romantic lead gets his eyesight back offscreen? Actually, I would first ask why is Han blind at all? (Or why is Chewie wounded? Why is Leia shot? Why is her blood the only human blood we see in the entire saga?)

Ann Wortham asks why argue who the hero is. Because there are still two approaches to solving a problem being portrayed. Perhaps the simplest way to describe the situation is to start with Kenobi's line to Solo in ANH: "There are alternatives to fighting." Thereafter, it takes Solo the rest of that movie and most of TESB to agree and to show his agreement in the carbon freezing sequence by taking Threepio's advice: "Surrender is a perfectly viable alternative." And the correctness of this methodology is proven repeatedly in ROTJ when a whole series of characters and groups of characters on both sides are ordered to "Freeze!"--at which point someone (Wicket, the Emperor's crack troops, 3PO and the Ewok hordes, Leia with blaster) strikes from hiding to turn the tide of the battle.

The other course of action is Luke's--also apparently taught by the Jedi: when in doubt or outnumbered, attack (once known as the Han Solo School of Action Without Thought)--for instance, leaving a blind man, a wounded Wookiee and a Bad Guy on one skiff to attack a whole crowd on the other skiff; anything you do against evil is okay (putting the droids and Leia in Jabba's control, choking the pig guards, manipulating Bib Fortuna). I'll say I think both Luke and Han, et al, are heroes, but Luke's actions tend to excuse and perpetuate as "right" attitudes which are questionable to me.

Which leads me to Luke's green saber. I look at the spectrum and see green as one step along the road to red from blue. But I did like Lorenstein's color wheels. As for the color-symbolism, I think I'd agree that it depends on what system one applies. In discussing Lucas-worlds, though, I point to one of the differences between Kurtz' Deryni Chronicles and Norton's Witch World series. In the latter, blue magic is positive; red is negative. In the former it's the exact oppo-

site. But in both the users/workers of red are opponents of the blue. In SW, we were first presented with a blue saber in the hands of three good guys (Luke, Kenobi, even Han). The red saber has been wielded by a destroyer. Again, opposing positions.

In addition, someone pointed out to me that in film processing and in television technology, the basic colors are red, blue and green--not yellow as in pigments. It seems an appropriate color scheme for Lucas to use (since he's a creator in the medium of film and light projection). Thing is, in JEDI Vader is red and Luke is now green--which combination is what happens when a TV set loses its blue (as Luke lost his saber on Bespin). So how come the JEDI poster has a blue saber? Who wields that saber--or represents its position in the balance of the "natural" color scheme?

And it occurred to me to look at the "should Luke love Vader" question from another point of view. Why shouldn't Luke love Vader? He's never seen him as Leia has or any of the Imperial officers in TESB have or as Han has. Along with those characters, we see Vader--from the moment of his entry in ANH--behave in the manner of a bad guy. Luke does not. He engages in knightly combat with Vader, converses with him of equality and balances of power. It's easy for him to say there's good inside there, to maintain the "lovable" fiction. He does not know the bad father, only the good one. Is there perhaps a greater disillusionment on this score waiting for Luke?

While I'm on questions: the music on JEDI still fascinates me. There are the twins, Luke and Leia, kiting along through the forest of Endor, in look-alike costumes, matching actions--and no music. No Main Theme (which used to be Luke's theme until TESB), no Leia theme, no Luke and Leia theme, no Daddy theme, nothing. And then the title cut from JEDI (for the most part a hodge-podge of two films--old-themes which was nominated by who-knows-who for a People's Choice award) plays over the barge-skiff escape battle and introduces its only new theme over the actions of Han Solo.

The People's Choice... Did anybody see the show? They get

real cute at the PC and announce their foregone conclusions (already publicized so they can get folks there) with sidelong references to what each of three choices is known for or all about. Billy Dee Williams, Tony Daniels (as Threepio) and Artoo were there to accept for JEDI, which won Favorite Film over TERMS OF ENDEARMENT and SILKWOOD; but in announcing it, Dudley Moore didn't mention the two very popular runners-up at all. Instead, he choked through one of the most convoluted introductions I've ever heard, all about how in Medieval times you could tell a person's rank by their position in relation to the king: the queen on the left, the best friend on the right, and other ministers, etc., in circles out from there, and the jester at the king's feet. I thought of the closing shot in JEDI.

Speaking of things Medieval, I loved one bit in the PBS special (actually several bits, but this one caught me) where Mark Hamill (as narrator) says Luke gets his early training from a "gentle and perfect knight." This is from the description Chaucer gives of the knight who first regales the pilgrims on the road to Canterbury. His story is about two knights (cousins, if not brothers) who battle for a lady they both love: one prays to Mars for victory; the other to Venus for love. Both the gods granted the requests. The first won the battle, but during his triumphant march after, he fell off his horse on his head and died. The other then married the lady--after a suitable funeral, complete with knight on pyre.

Another question, and convoluted. Background material tells us that the temple on Yavin's moon is 1,000 years old, as is the cloud city on Bespin. Yoda is 900+ years old--close enough. And then there's the Millennium Falcon, a thousand-year-old bird of the hunt and the preferred choice of kings.

The victims of the Sarlacc are digested (doesn't necessarily mean killed when you think about it) for 1,000 years. And, then in RAIDERS, of all places, there's that bit from Belloq: "Look at this [watch]. Ten dollars from a vendor in the street, but if I bury it in the sand for a thousand years, it becomes priceless. Men will

kill for it. Men like you and me." Followed much later (Indy about to be sealed in the Well of Souls) by, "Who knows? In a thousand years even you may be worth something!" I wonder about that Sarlacc. What might have happened to Luke had he gone in? What might be happening to Boba Fett even now? Was his character really wasted?

Finally, have you noticed how many of the things that happen to Threepio happen to Han and vice versa? For instance, 3PO gets hauled along in Artoo's wake (in ANH) just as Han follows Luke into Death Star trouble in the same film. And in TESB (leaving the asteroid cave), 3PO falls right-to-left in the Falcon; cut to Han falling at the same angle. Or in ANH Luke and Kenobi lift 3PO as a wipe follows them up the screen, and the same happens with Han (TESB, Bespin) when Leia and Chewie lift him in the cell. And 3PO is blown apart on Bespin shortly before Han goes to carbon freeze where 3PO (fixed, sort of) is saying, "I can't see!" And then on Tatooine, Salacious Crumb plucks 3PO's eye as Han's shooting the Sarlacc; 3PO falls head-first into the sand, which is what Han would have done if he hadn't had loooooong toes. It even comes down to Han being threatened with burning again (in 3PO's place) because even the Ewoks can tell their god won't burn.

And folks keep telling me that Lucas isn't complex! Fly casual...



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Any number of people are jumping up and down because some of us have criticized Luke in this film. Well, we didn't write the film; George Lucas did. We didn't put the events on the screen; George Lucas did. We didn't do ROTJ in such a way as to raise the issues of bigotry, responsibility, etc.; George Lucas did. It's like killing the messenger for delivering bad news.

This film is neither what I expected nor what I wanted. I expected the failures of TESB to be Luke's coming of age, that he would mature into the hero everyone--myself included--expected him to be, that, as much as I wanted Han rescued, Luke would, as the TESB novelization states clearly, return to Dagobah to admit his failures and continue his training. I wanted a film that would make everyone happy, that would leave enough openings for zines and the like to continue (well, that much I got: this film has certainly left openings!). Lucas gave me neither, and while I'm not happy with it, I cannot deny what is there.

I have no problem with someone telling me that Luke has done things wrong in ROTJ, had some wrong attitudes, but that he caught himself at the end and has turned the corner, and is on his way up. I may think it's darker, simply because I do not believe in instantaneous redemption, and that Luke still has to work at coming back up that path, but I can agree that he may be seeing himself more clearly. My disagreement is with those who tell me that, despite his violating the rules we've been given and despite his betraying 3PO, etc., etc., he has done nothing wrong, that he was always right and Yoda (who merely has been teaching it for 800 years) is wrong, and that Luke knows best. That attitude is ridiculous as someone saying that Luke has fallen into the deepest abyss possible and is irredeemably lost.

As far as I'm concerned, it is not those who criticize him who threaten to doom him, but those who defend him blindly and say that he is perfect. If Luke believes that same way, he is doomed for he will never recog-

nize those flaws in himself that brought him to the edge, and you cannot defend against something you do not recognize exists. Do you simply stand by while someone you care about walks over the edge of a cliff because you don't want to criticize him? No, you grab him by the collar, shake him and demand to know what the hell he is doing! Luke has a lot of problems here; he has to see them to survive.

It's funny but any number of people find it offensive if you raise the idea that Lucas might be toying with godhead implications for any other character, especially Han, but find nothing wrong in ascribing those characteristics to Luke. What else is saying that Luke was always right, that he knew when no one else did, that Yoda, et al, is wrong, that the rules don't apply (Luke can find his own solutions), that he is above criticism, if it is not calling him, in so many words, a god? Who else but a god can violate the rules without paying? Who else but a god can follow his whims whenever he chooses, regardless of responsibilities, without paying? Who else but a god can treat his companions in any manner he chooses and never apologize, without paying?

Lucas himself has said that Luke is the one with the problems (ROLLING STONE), yet those taking the attitude that Luke has done nothing wrong, their Luke has no problems at all. How could he, when everything he did or thought was right? (Is that the problem to which Lucas referred, how boring it is to be always right? Somehow, I doubt it!). Question Authority--which is being offered by some fans as Lucas' dictum--means question Luke as well as anyone else in the Saga.

Leaving the film itself aside for a moment, there have been enough quotes from Lucas and Marquand to indicate that Luke is in trouble (there are some who will say, what does Marquand know--he is, after all, only the director of the film! Well, a darn sight more than any fan. Especially as he indicated that Lucas gave him the treatments for all nine films). The most obvious statement is the one Lucas made on the PBS special about "...his final turn...to the bad side..." when he tried to kill his father. Luke was not there to try to

kill his father; he was supposed to be there to try and defeat evil. He ended up not fighting Vader as a Jedi, but as a son attempting patricide. Those are two very different things. And Lucas is pointing out this failure on Luke's part. When Yoda said "confront", the key was how Luke confronted Vader. Lucas is telling us that Luke confronted him incorrectly, that Luke's reason for going to the Death Star--to turn his father rather than to confront evil--was the wrong one, and that Luke paid the price for his failure and his violation of the rules concerning Force-usage.

Note that Luke defeats Vader at this point precisely because he is stronger in the Dark Side than Vader. Luke is fighting with all the negative emotions, especially hate, and Yoda tells us that these are the Dark Side (not that they merely lead to it). Had Luke been fighting correctly, in control of himself and for the right reasons, he would have defeated Vader because he was strong in the Light. The fact that it was the other way is a bad sign.

Some other statements of note: Marquand stated that throughout ROTJ, Luke's character steadily darkens, and that it's "...not me, it's in the script." He also stated that, in ROTJ, Vader has to finally realize that there "...is a power greater and darker than himself." (emphasis added) Clearly, Marquand cannot be referring to the Emperor since Vader has been aware of him for over twenty years. Then there was the remark that Mark had to come to terms with the fact that there was no more Luke Skywalker. "Oh, dear, I've given something away." Certainly that last comment does not seem to refer to the first trilogy not being directly about Luke, since there wouldn't be anyone reading the interview in question who did not already know that. When you add this to a remark by Lucas in SKYWALKING about the struggle between Luke and Vader that ends with the comment, "...but will he [Luke] become Darth Vader?", it suddenly takes on ominous overtones. ((Ed's note: A stray thought here... Could it be that "Darth Vader" is not a proper name, but a title of some sort? Like "Grand Moff Tarkin"? That might put a new perspective on things.))

Especially as, at the end of the film, Luke still looks so much like dear old Dad. He is still wearing the glove--suggesting he never got his hand fixed, though it was shot in the controls (from the book on the making of ROTJ). Luke is still out of control?--he is still wearing the saber in a peaceful gathering and he is still dressed 95% in black. This is a point where I disagree with Terri Black's article--though I thought it was very good and very interesting. The little flap we see is not white, but gray, which is better than black, but certainly not the symbolic equivalent of white. Even more, we do not know that the entire lining of Luke's outfit is this gray, only that this little bit of flap that we see is so lined (for all we know, Vader's outfit might be lined the same way. I think that it does have definite symbolic meaning--exactly what the physical look indicates: a sliver of gray amidst a "sea" of black, and I think it means that Luke has been offered hope, that he has the possibility before him of finding his way back. I think it's a very good sign for him.

One further observation on this: All the negative actions that have engendered the criticism appear virtually unchallenged on the screen. The excuses, on the other hand, are purely speculative (isn't it possible that...? perhaps... etc.). One has to ask why the film would be constructed this way. You do not write a story so that it disputes the actions of the putative hero; you write it so that it supports him, since he is supposed to represent the message of the tale. Lucas did it in such a way that everything Luke does virtually has to be fought over, explained away, excused, so that all the other characters have to be diminished or declared wrong or stupid to avoid having Luke labelled as doing things wrong. It doesn't make any sense--unless Luke is supposed to be judged as behaving wrongly.

Ever onward: any number of people have said that Luke turns it all around (or becomes a Jedi, etc.) when he throws the lightsaber away on the Death Star. I have to say that I don't agree. First, if this is true, then what does it mean

that Luke has it back again at the end (you can check this from the PBS special, if the film isn't still in your area)? That he went out of his way while the Death Star was falling apart to go back and get it (he did not have it when he was hauling DV)? If, as this theory postulates, he should have thrown it away because it was tainted with his negative use of the Force, is it any less tainted when he takes it back and carries it into a peaceful gathering, the only weapon there?

I feel the opposite about it: I feel that his throwing it away was a sign of defeat, because it stated that he had to divest himself of his power and his external symbol of Jedi-hood in order to avoid falling to the Dark. That he could not fight and remain in control, so he had to stop fighting, even if that meant simply quitting and letting evil survive. There would have been nothing wrong with Luke's using the saber had he used it as a Jedi, in control. His throwing it away seemed to me to be a tacit recognition on his part that he could not use it and remain in control.

However, his taking it back may symbolize his determination to master himself, and his recognition that he had not yet learned to do so; that he would learn to use it as a Jedi and that it would be not only a symbol of what he wished to become, but also a warning or reminder of what happened on the Death Star.

There have been complaints that we are being too hard on Luke, too judgmental. Well, I don't think you can be too hard on Luke. First, he is no longer just off the farm; that cannot be used as an excuse for his behavior. Second, the same people making this claim also claim Luke is the hero. Well, you can't judge the hero too harshly; he is held to the highest standard of all, not to a lesser standard than anyone else. If he cannot live to this standard, perhaps his hero status should be re-evaluated until he can.

Lastly, myths and fairy tales are extremely harsh in their judgments. You absolutely cannot violate the rules of morality without being severely punished. Even an innocent violation calls for payment. An example: there is a Hindu tale in which a man was married to a

demi-urge. The only condition was that he could not see her naked. One night, while they were undressing in the dark, a bolt of lightning lit up the room and he saw her. He could not have been more innocent, yet he was punished for it, and it took years for him to work his way back into a state of grace. Luke's violations are not either innocent or unintentional. Why would he not be required to make payment? In fairy tales, only those victims of a curse can receive instantaneous redemption, like Sleeping Beauty. (There is in fact a Sleeping Beauty figure in the Saga, but more on that another letter. Interestingly enough, it means something very different when the figure is male than when it is female.)

To Mickey Malkin: I have to admit I find your particular criticisms of Melody Corbett's alchemy article somewhat incredible. Some have self-evident fallacies, some I'm sure others will address and some are for another time. However, certain statements I would like to examine now. First, though, I am glad to see that you do not disagree that Han did go through the process successfully (I'm sure in light of your other criticisms that it would have been the first thing you had said if you did disagree).

Incredibly, though, the underlying theory behind your criticisms seems to be that the article is not about Luke! Contrary to your statement, Melody never said Luke failed the process, merely that he never went through it (if you feel otherwise, I would be very interested in seeing an article to that effect, with each step set out in much the same fashion; it would certainly raise certain implications). You seem annoyed because Melody suggested that Lucas was doing something with Han that he was not also doing with Luke. This seems to be a strange attitude on your part, since you've always claimed that everyone was treated fairly in ROTJ. Well, fairly means everyone gets a fair share of the pie, not that everyone gets the same thing.

When you speak of the fact that Melody is wrong about the three "uniting", you are talking about the fact that they are still friends at the end. Melody, on the other hand, is talk-

ing about spiritual development. The three characters represent different characteristics that the one passing through the process must integrate into himself. You also ask if Luke's leaving Dagobah might not have been a test known only to Yoda that Luke passed. Not according to ROTJ it isn't: it is Yoda himself who still says that Luke's leaving was wrong. Yoda has not changed his position on this at all.

I really found your remarks about Chewie astounding, and I can only assume you had a bad day when you read that part of the article! It seems a clear case of misreading what was being said. Melody was talking about the elements of fairy tale. Fairy tales were designed by cultures that, while extremely sophisticated socially, were technologically less advanced. They did not think in terms of space and alien species, but of Earth equivalents, of elves and gremlins--and animals. Lucas took this framework and applied it to an outer space location and the elves became Yoda and the animal element became Chewie.

Surely you are aware that the "animals" in fairy tales weren't really animals at all, but magical creatures who were intelligent, spoke in understandable tongues and acted as advisors and/or Companion-Protectors to the hero--a perfect description of Chewie. It's interesting that an earlier article--"Button, Button" [in JUNDLAND WASTES?]-went so far as to use the term "animal helper" to describe Chewie--and there did not seem to be any outcry on anyone's part I can recall.

However, in light of your attitude toward Chewie, I find it hard to believe that you wrote what you did just a couple of paragraphs earlier: "Yoda doesn't seem to be interested in training Leia, who he knows is the Other. Instead, he waits for Luke to return to Dagobah, as Luke said he would (and does)." Yes, indeed. Leaving aside the fact that Luke did not really return as he was expected to do and even assuming that the statement that Yoda knows Leia is the Other is correct (though there is nothing in the film to support it), don't you find this an itsy-bit-sy, teensy-weensy bit sexist?

This is a clear slap at women, a bit of tokenism that means nothing, since a woman doesn't seem worthy of training. As a Leia fan from the beginning, it certainly bothers me. I'm surprised it doesn't seem to bother you, considering how you feel about Chewie.

All this leads us to one of the most questionable actions in the film: Luke's behavior toward 3PO. This person, according to the creator of the film, is treated like furniture by Luke. This companion, who has helped save and who has worried over Luke through two films, is callously betrayed and sold into slavery. There have been those who claim it's O.K. because 3PO is a blabbermouth. Hardly. There has not been one instance in which 3PO has given away the plans of the good guys, and the rebels trust him enough to have him at the conference (besides, who says you can betray someone simply because he talks--especially when he is not needed in the first place and could just have easily been left home?).

Others claim it doesn't matter because 3PO is a machine. Not according to Lucas he isn't. Lucas has continually referred to him as "people". Most directly on point, however, is SKYWALKING, page 213, where it is pointed out that the droids and Chewie are in the film to show that no matter how odd or different people seem, they can still be true and faithful friends (emphasis added). "Lucas says he uses aliens and robots to make (however subtly) a point about discrimination--at one point, R2D2 and C3PO are barred from entering the space cantina." The droids and Chewie are Lucas' minorities. Lucas takes this issue seriously: he does not market in South Africa.

It has been claimed that 3PO knew and his comments were only to cover up the plan. Not only were the comments unnecessary if this is true and the stand unanswered, thereby blotting Luke's character, but there also is nothing in the film to support this theory. In fact, as the film goes on, you can see that 3PO is angry with Luke: he doesn't really speak to him after Tatooine, he has to be reminded to put Luke into his story at the Ewok village and he stops worrying about Luke, something he did in ANH and

TESB. Anthony Daniels, in fact, stated that Lucas made 3PO a god to make up for making him a slave, so he clearly doesn't think the droid knew! I am reminded of an exchange in 1776 between John Adams and Edward Rutledge about a passage in the proposed Declaration about freeing the slaves. Rutledge protests that they are property and Adams replies, "No, sir. They are people being treated like property." At Jabba's palace, so is 3PO.

To Terri Black: I agree that compassion is a valued quality--though, like mercy, it is a double-edged sword. If you give it to the tiger, you keep it from the lamb; we must always be aware of this dual nature--but I doubt the "compassion" presumably being displayed. Where is the compassion for 3PO or for those on board the sand barge? There does not seem to be any need for this action--Jabba is dead and the deck is cleared of all resistance--and there does not seem to be any thought for any slaves that might be on board or for the pathetic hangers-on like the band, who probably never harmed anyone and were just trying to stay alive in a nasty galaxy.

As for compassion toward DV: what about for his victims, to whom Luke seems to give no thought? He sees no evil in Vader at all. Who speaks for them? And Luke does not stop from killing Dad because of compassion, but because of fear, fear that he will be just like Vader. What of the rebels, whom he deserts when they might need his skills? Lastly, what about the rest of the galaxy? Luke goes, according to his own words, to turn his father. He states several times that if he cannot, he will not fight, even if that leaves evil in control. Where is his feeling for those under the heel of the Empire?

No, I think there was compassion in the person I saw in ANH, but not in the person in ROTJ, no matter what his words say. I think part of the point of ROTJ is what can happen even to a good person when he opens himself to the blandishments of the Dark.

A last comment: I think the fact that Han and Leia still care for Luke at the end tells us not about Luke, as has been suggested, but about them, and what kind of people they are.



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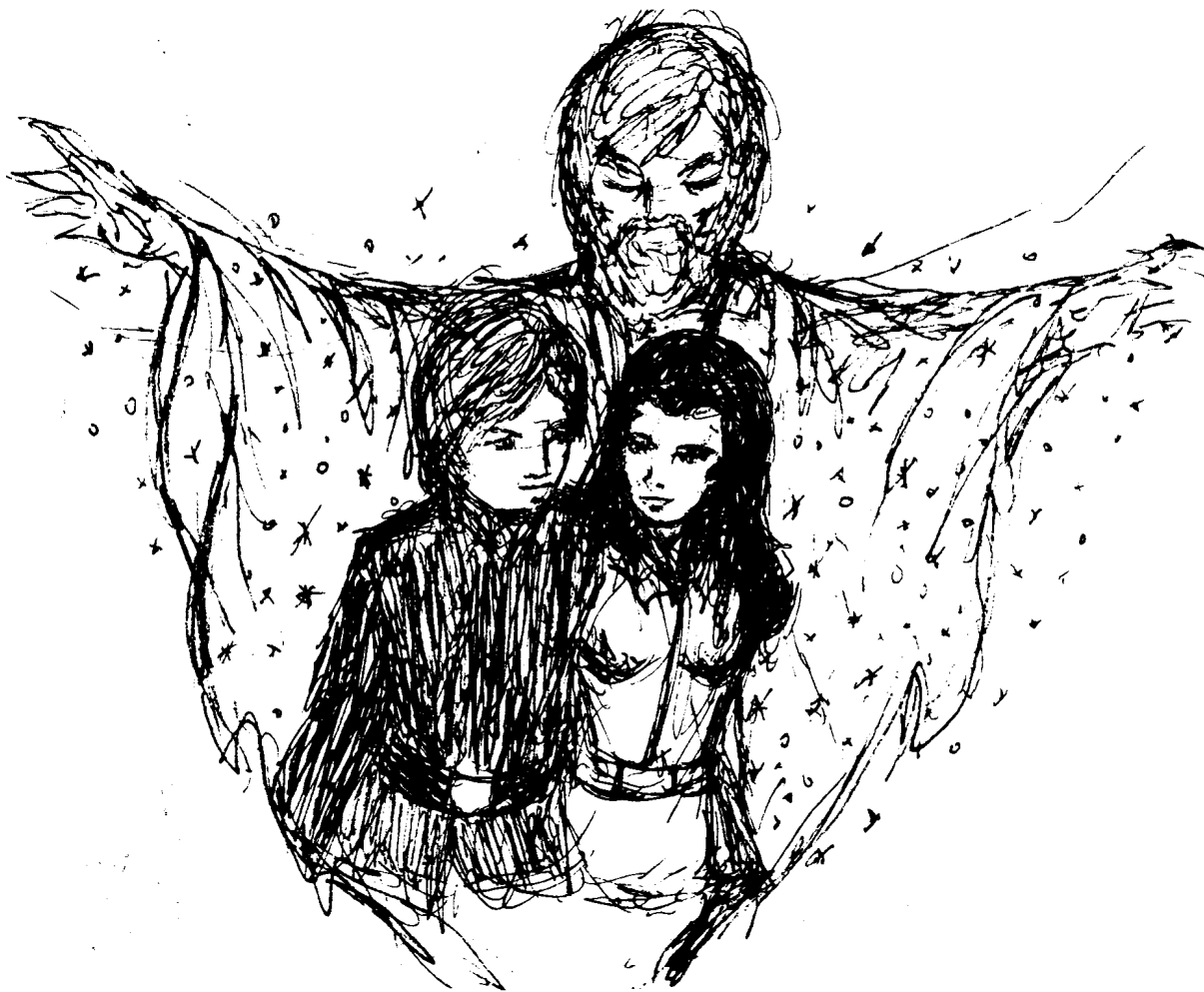
April 11, 1984

I found, as usual, the letters in your last issue (#3) to be both provocative and engrossing. I'd really like to reply to or comment on all of them, but (being more merciful than the Emperor, at any rate) I'll restrain my prolixic tendencies and focus on one particular topic which seemed to have become sort of a de facto "theme" in #3: the statement, "question authority." In addition to Jean L. Stevenson's article, this phrase appeared verbatim in two other places, and thematically, in several more; but the statement itself was never properly explored.

I don't wish to attack Ms. Stevenson personally, especially as I have seen (and enjoyed) enough of her excellent work elsewhere to know that she is a thoughtful writer and a conscientious craftsperson on the whole. But I found this particular article to be dissatisfying and distractingly disorganized, not up to Ms. Stevenson's usual standards. There are ways of structuring an examination of this topic without name-dropping, without flopping belly-up in the face of self-inflicted random thought associations, and without straying into the dim and nebulous realms of Jedi cosmology as applied to Fantasy, the Real World, and Everything (not to mention the burning issue of the precise degree of George Lucas' social consciousness). Also, I admit to feeling rather irritated at the peculiar distinction Ms. Stevenson chose to draw between Catholic, Chris-

tian and Protestant analogical symbolism; I realize that she was merely trying to make a point about the discrepancies between types of analogical "tools" theoretically available for use in discussing the Force (this in itself a digression from the original theme of the article), but I would've appreciated it if she had either picked something less touchy to use for her examples, or at least handled the matter more tactfully. But despite my ruffled sensibilities, I found Ms. Stevenson's article to contain considerable food for thought; and it may be that the provocative format in which her ideas were presented made me pay more attention to the subject than I might have otherwise. Perhaps she didn't intend to analyze this particular subject in depth at all. But if that was the case, both the title of the article and its opening paragraphs are misleading, intriguing as they are. The statement "question authority" deserves detailed examination in and of itself. Before attempting to apply a precept like "question authority," it is well to understand something of what the precept (or its exponent) intends.

The statement "question authority" is most commonly interpreted to mean "challenge" authority, with the additional implication that authority is likely to prove unequal to the test, and that such false authority should be deposed. This isn't "wrong", it's just simplistic, only a part of the larger meaning of the statement. There are many obvious examples of this (quite proper) interpretation in the STAR WARS movies: you can see it in the actions of the Rebels in general (they are challenging and seeking to depose an authoritarian government which has proved to be unworthy), and of Luke Skywalker in particular (as he challenges Darth Vader and the Emperor). However, it is important to keep in mind, when considering this statement, that "authority" need not be assumed to be intrinsically wrong, damned by the mere fact of its title. Upon being challenged, authority may quite easily prove to be genuine: for instance, Yoda may in fact know more about the mechanics of using the Force than oneself. "Question" authority does



not mean "automatically defy" authority--especially, it does not mean thoughtless, reflexive rejection of superior knowledge, ability, intuition, what-have-you. The word "question" can also (and should) be interpreted as "test": "question authority" is as much an injunction to identify true authority as it is to challenge purported mastery. The act of questioning authority, in this manner, can be beneficial both to the individual and to individuals en masse. If you discover a need for instruction, it is well to make sure (as far as you are able) that you find a worthy (or at least capable) master from whom to learn.

And besides, nobody said that the "authorities" themselves are ever beyond the stage where they can learn from the experience of being challenged themselves; and neither the challenged nor the challenger necessarily suffers a diminishing of expertise/mastery/authority merely because of having been tested.

Bereft of its complex implications, the statement "question authority" remains a useful instruction: in the most literal sense, it means ask for answers. Having presumably found an authority (of whatever nature "authority is in the eye of the pupil

--no pun intended), one should seek to learn what the authority has to impart. The use of the imperative "question" reflects the fact that learning is an active, not a passive, experience. (So, of course, is teaching, but the statement under discussion doesn't deal with that aspect of the problem.) This is particularly useful if, being a scientist, you consider your "authorities" to be the laws of physics: not all authorities are equally loquacious. Even those capable of speech may not speak to the point; it is necessary to be able to identify the matters about which you are curious or seek instruction. In its most literal interpretation, the statement "question authority" still makes sense, though not, perhaps, in the way the statement is most commonly understood.

Finally, it is important to realize that in the most fundamental terms, the statement "question authority" is an oxymoron, a sort of perverse, Zen-like joke. The statement contradicts itself: being cast in the imperative, the precept promotes itself as an authority, the very thing it warns you to approach with caution. It alerts a perceptive mind to the need of examining even the simplest, most obvious sources of

instruction with a certain amount of dubiousness from the beginning--though the statement does not proscribe an attitude of respect; a healthy scepticism is not necessarily incompatible with due reverence/courtesy for someone or something of superior knowledge, experience, ability (etc.). If the "student" is sufficiently nimble-minded, that basic questioning will grow to encompass even her/himself. As a joke, the statement fosters a positive (albeit somewhat wry and ironic) approach to existence; but the humor of the statement in no way detracts from the wisdom it has to offer. One might say that the precept "question authority" serves to encourage doubt; but doubt, and curiosity, are very much two aspects of the same quality. This quality can also be described as maintaining a fundamental receptivity towards learning, however large, small or apparently unlikely the source of experience/education. "Question authority"--keep an open mind at all times, even in the presence of (an) Authority.

Learn.

Rather than end on such a decidedly conclusive note, I'm going to stick in one more comment, sort of a propos nothing. To Terri Black: I enjoyed your observations about ROTJ contain-

ing a "true space battle; all three dimensions are in constant use"; I agree! But (always but) there is one fairly common means of Terran transportation which involves all three dimensions at once: (underwater) swimming. Me, I've always felt as though I was flying, underwater; that's one of the reasons I love swimming so much. A small point--and quite possibly many/most people simply orient themselves to the surface of the water in place of the surface of the ground.



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March 11, 1984

Well, after sitting on the sidelines for three issues, I've finally decided to participate. The discussions have been getting better and better, so I couldn't help but add my input!

Christine Jeffords: In your letter, you mentioned that the Empire is "not yet overthrown." How right! "A battle (or two) does not a war make." There are plenty of young Imperial officers eager to take over, now that both Vader and Palpatine are dead. If, as you say, the Emperor didn't have an heir or heiress, though that's possible, maybe Vader had other children, raised with the Dark Side, or the late Tarkin raised a son or daughter to inherit the throne. All possibilities, but one thing is for sure--the Rebels still have one helluva fight on their hands!

Cheree mentioned in this letter that Mon Mothma was a highly placed senator or something, but what I want to know is, why, if she's such an important part of the Rebellion, she wasn't heard of before? ((Ed's Note: I think Mon Mothma will be featured heavily in the first trilogy, dealing with the Clone

Wars, the rise of Palpatine and the fall of the Republic. It's even possible that she and Obi-Wan were lovers once.)) It was also mentioned that Leia might still be a senator, but I for one think she would get a higher post, in addition, like governor, or such, if that is applicable in the "new" society created. I mean, Leia dedicated a lot to the Rebellion, she should be rewarded.

Christine, I don't agree; I think Luke was justified in crying out when the Emperor was "Force-torturing" him. I think it wasn't only the physical pain he was objecting to, but to all extents and purposes, he had FAILED. The Rebellion was doomed, as were Han and Leia, and he had been wrong about Vader (or so he must have thought at the time). That would be enough to destroy anyone, much less the fact he was under bolts of intense pain.

You also mentioned that Ben proved that death wasn't the end, but in all truth, Ben wasn't much help physically, he was limited to advising Luke. Sure, the "deceased" Luke could advise Leia, but (1) she might not have survived the attack on the bunker and (2) it would have taken a while to "train" her, and if Ben, with years of experience, didn't do that well, why would Luke?

Mary Urhausen: I loved your ideas for Lucasfilm merchandise! Seriously, though, I kinda miss the "ultimate personification of evil" that Vader was, but for him to stay the villain would have defeated the purpose of ROTJ. I think Han Solo got the reputation of "super stud" due to his cocky (no pun intended) attitude. I mean, there are some guys you can just TELL are womanizers; we've all met them. Granted, Han has never given any evidence, but even Brian Daley has conjured Han up this way. Protecting Han's reputation is gonna be a losing battle! Maybe Cheree explained it best in her editor's note!

Mary, you say that "Ben and Yoda were WRONG...", well, I think Yoda had a "master plan" in his head at all times. Ben, unfortunately, was wrong a good deal, but I don't remember Yoda as ever being so. At the beginning, in TESB, Yoda says, "But will he finish what he begins?", perhaps foreseeing Luke's departure to save his friends. This

could have been a test, also, to see if Luke had the independence to do what his heart and emotions tell him. Luke was constantly told, "You must do what you feel is right, of course." Also, Yoda never said Luke couldn't turn Vader, he said he must FACE him. This could be a reference to Vader's unmasking, if taken literally, also. I'm reasonably sure it was stated in ROTJ that Yoda wanted to tell Luke about his father's identity, but Ben disagreed. Maybe it was the novelization, but I'm sure I heard that somewhere. It's my opinion that Yoda always knew what he was doing, and that Luke has surpassed Ben, at least, though he needs more experience to reach Yoda's level of Force-understanding.

One last comment, Mary, and then onward. You asked why Leia had changed from fatigues in the Ewok village. Well, I'd imagine that getting thrown from a speeder-bike at close to two hundred miles an hour and then ambushed by an Imperial biker scout tends to leave one's clothes a little ripped and dirty!

Michelle Malkin: You mention that "Luke is never prickly with either of them [Han or Leia]..." I tend to disagree, at least, partially. Luke acts a little "prickly" with Han in both the computer terminal room, where they are dressed as stormtroopers and Han has just shot all the guards, and then again when Han refuses to join the Rebellion on Yavin. Then, in the Falcon's cockpit, there is a little tension when Leia is being discussed ("Do you think a Princess and a guy like me--?" "NO!"). But besides those few circumstances, the duo had a pretty good relationship.

I agree with both you, Mickey, and anyone else who has mentioned this fact, that it's Lucas' saga and people say "he's wrong, that's not how it should be." For God's sake, the man CREATED the saga! How can he be WRONG?!

You also mentioned that people were dumping on the Alliance for not mourning Vader's death, well, why should they? Vader was the villain and participated in the deaths of thousands or so we have been led to believe. Vader was "the bad guy", so why should the "good guys" mourn his death? Especially

ally Leia! Vader was part of the destruction of Alderaan and also a big part of her interrogation. Granted, Luke had reason; Vader was his father, and he knew Vader had good in him. I'll bet the Rebel on the Blockade Runner (the one Vader choked) wouldn't believe that, though!

Barbara Tennison: You mention that the right team is as important as the right individual. I agree. This idea is predominant on television. THE A TEAM, SIMON & SIMON, etc., support this theory.

Why does Luke have to suspect someone close to him is his sister? That is, if we go by the premise that the Force didn't give this away, then maybe his sister was millions of miles (or the SW equivalent) away. That would have been more feasible to me, though it wouldn't have solved the "triangle."

Barbara, you brought up the point of having someone else do the remaining SW movies. I think if the person made it a labor of love, like George did, and not just another job, the saga could work out. I'd like to see Lucas with his hand in it somehow, though.

Carole Regine: HI! Well, here I am, writing to you again! This time, though, we're going public!

You mention the topic of "conditional love" between Vader and Luke, commenting on Karen Osman's letter. Truthfully, though, the conditions HAD TO be made. It would have been impossible for Vader and Luke to have a relationship as things were. Someone has to change, if they were to "become" father and son. Unfortunately, this sacrifice led to Vader's death.

I think Luke WAS consumed by the Dark Side for a moment. Yoda says, "Once you start down the dark path, forever will it dominate your destiny." Does this mean Luke is to be forever plagued by Dark thoughts and deeds, not becoming EVIL, but forever being open to temptation? Or does it mean he is to follow in the late, great Sith Lord's ominous footsteps? Loved the idea of Vader remembering his own pain through Luke!

Ann Wortham: I have to disagree with your statement that Luke was the only character in ROTJ that went through emotional changes. I feel Han

did, too. Maybe his change started in TESB, or even ANH, but then, in reality, do did Luke's. Han has grown from a self-serving space pirate to a dedicated leader in the Rebellion--a BIG change. It was a long process, but I think ROTJ illustrates how Han had come full circle.

Bev Lorestein: I agree with you and Chris Jeffords. I think anyone can use the Force, though not everyone can be a Jedi. If it is created by all living things, why can't all living things use it? In the Daley novels, he writes, "At times, Han's luck had rivalled anything he'd ever seen," or something to that extent. I think this is Han's way of unconsciously using the Force. Maybe that is part of the reason he has stayed alive so long in a dangerous occupation.

Debbie Gilbert: I would like to see other Sith Lords, or Ladies, try to re-establish the Empire. That is, if there are other Sith, as we'd been led to believe. Maybe a type of Roman triumvirate could be established.

A quick thought about Corellians: I had always thought they were a race or nationality, or such, as in Italian. The word structure of the two is similar, maybe that is a hint from Lucas.

Jean Stevenson: Luke couldn't very well tell Jabba, "Well, I'm ALMOST a Jedi!" First impressions count and an Almost-Jedi wouldn't seem too frightening to a crime lord. Unfortunately, neither did a Jedi...at first.

It's been mentioned that perhaps only barren women would be allowed to become warriors. This would make one assume that barren women are not considered for "marriage." Maybe this explains an absence of mention of Leia's past loves. But, if this is true, you would think Leia would feel obligated to tell Han she can't have children. You would also suspect she would be upset that maybe she's good enough to sleep with, but not good enough to marry, join, mate, seal, graft to, or whatever the SW term is. She would probably also be upset that Han might reject her when he finds she's "unacceptable." ((Editor's Note: this is, of course, assuming that the SW universe works on the Judeo-Christian

morality system and also assuming that Alderaanians and Corellians have only two sexes. As long as we're playing "what if", we can postulate that perhaps there are several sexes here and that Leia may be a non-producing female. Or, if we stay within Earth/human norms, there are still plenty of women who choose not to have children and are still perfectly acceptable members of society. I don't think, from what we've been shown, that Han would reject her simply because she might not be able to give him children. For all we know, Corellians may be polygamous and he may have several families elsewhere in the galaxy. The possibilities are endless!)) Besides, the majority of the three films centers on our heroic trio, so the absence of other women isn't surprising. Female pilots seemed few (I didn't see any, though that doesn't mean they weren't there) but the women could have been diplomats, technicians, etc.

Tim Blaes: You mention that one person would have to take control of the "new" government. Who would you think that would be? Mon Mothma seems unlikely, because I don't think she is "ruthless" enough to hold a galaxy together. Any ideas? Leia might be a good choice, but does she have enough experience?

Tim, I loved your hypothesis of Luke "doing his Duty" through artificial insemination! Those poor girls! I'd like to add to your "what-if" list: WHAT IF Leia had fallen for Lando instead of Han? What if Han had escorted Luke to Dagobah? What if Luke had died in the blizzard on Hoth, or Han, or both?

One final comment to Marcia Brin: You ask how many married fen consider their sibling relationship less important than their married one. How many married couples have a Force relationship (which would be pretty binding, I'd think)? I'm not saying Luke and Leia's relationship is more important than Han and Leia's, but being "Forcefully" bound to her brother, who is also a close friend, makes a strong relationship. Also, where did you get the impression that Leia was searching for a mate? As far as I could see, she was doing alright independently and not looking for an attachment.

Well, now that I've taken

up more than my share of space, I can't wait to get the next issue! Until then...CLEAR SKIES!



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Glad you went to reduction, Cheree. I don't know about anybody else out there, but I find reduced type easier to read.

I'd like to go back to SE#2 for a moment, if I may, to reply to Ann Wortham. I've had both my best friend and my husband say fundamentally the same things to me as was said to you. I'll tell you the same things I told them: that fannish writing has been a springboard to the pro world for many established writers. I may never make the transition, but I'm sure havin' a lot of fun trying to get there. Meanwhile, I have a story to tell (a series, actually--the Starbird's Children Series. There are 38 of them so far, with ten in zines due out around MediaWest. Hey, Chris--if you can plug your stuff, I can plug mine, right? Especially since I have one in your OUTLANDS CHRONICLES #2, and two poems in A TREMOR IN THE FORCE. How's that for equal time, Cheree?) Hopefully, fen will enjoy my stories as much as I enjoy writing them. What more could I ask?

Dr. Mary Urhausen: Han Solo on intimate apparel? Lead me to it! ((Ed's note: Personally, I'd like to see Our Corellian doing a Jockey shorts ad a la Jim Palmer! Yum! Martynn and I did the next best thing with a vignette and illo in TREMOR

#1, in which we succeeded at least in getting Han down to his BVD's! See? I can plug my own stuff!)) Actually, I think it's Solo's attitude, the way he carries himself, aided and abetted by Harrison Ford's natural projection of sexuality (DROOL!) that has prompted the "Superstud" image. I personally have no designs on Solo's bod, but I can understand anyone who does.

Barbara Tennison: You're right--probably only Luke could see the three old Jedi at the Endor celebration. I think if Han, Leia or Chewie had seen them, they would have been a bit startled. They didn't seem startled; complacent is a better word.

If Lucas does decide to farm the remaining movies out, I hope Spielberg is his choice. It would seem logical, considering the friendship and work relationship between the two men. I think Spielberg would care about the films; he'd certainly pay more attention to characterization than Marquand did in ROTJ.

Carole Regine: I read more than thirty books a year (perhaps twice that, including horror and straight fiction in addition to F/SF), but zines have more of an attraction for me than does most of the media pro-fic I read. Fanfic is, for me as it is for you, more emotionally satisfying. Not only that, it's the only supply of SW fiction I have. (Unless I write the stories myself and I can only write so quickly.)

Bev Clark: Perhaps, to Obi-Wan, Anakin Skywalker, having abandoned the Light Side of the Force, was truly dead, his place having been taken by the newer incarnation of Darth Vader.

Marcia Brin: Luke will be very busy for a few years, training potential Jedi. The full burden will be on his shoulders until he has enough well-trained students to aid him. And I think he'll be very careful in whom he picks as his assistants--he won't want to repeat Ben's mistakes, will he?

Without resorting to re-reading the novelization of ANH, I believe I remember mentioning having been made of many Alliance techs being female. Of course, I would have like to have seen more women in positions of responsibility in the Alliance, but maybe we will in the last trilogy.

Hey, Cheree, it was great to see Thor in SE (what is he, anyway--Husky? German Shepherd? Elkhound?) but now my dogs want equal time! ((Ed's Note: Black Lady's Thor [Leisa Black Man Nemo x McMillan's Black Lady] is an AKC registered black German Shepherd Dog. He has no championships before his name and we have, in fact, never showed him, but he is our faithful friend, the fierce defender of our home, a tireless and loving companion and the joy of our lives. I really wanted to name him Darth Vader, but my husband wouldn't let me, perhaps because he still cringes over the fact that I had named my now 11-year-old Shepherd "Spock" (that was back in my Star Trek days and he does have pointed ears!)). If I could get a decent picture of Thor, I'd show you what he really looks like, but he is so coal black that he won't photograph! I mean, you can't see any details--it's just a dog-shaped black shadow with gold-brown eyes!))



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April 21, 1984

First of all, Cheree, I'd like to congratulate you on how wonderful SOUTHERN ENCLAVE 3 looks! Everything about it--layout, printing, etc. looks crisp, sharp and professional. Good work. ((Ed: ...puhhh...))

And the contents match the look. Everything, from articles to letters, was so thought-provoking that I found myself constantly interrupting my reading to jot down my own ideas and opinions while they were fresh in my mind. I'll try to control

myself, though, on how many I pass on, as to leave a few columns of blank space for someone else.

Dr. Mary Urhausen is one lady I found myself agreeing with almost all the way down the line. I especially would like to join S.P.P.H.S.I.S. I'm not sure where this myth came from about Han Solo--it relates to nothing in the films. And that the women who further this idea seem to like Solo (I could understand it from enemies) absolutely mystifies me. Frankly, I don't like (to put it mildly) the type of man who will "make it" with anything that will lie down long enough. Indicates a certain lack of discrimination, if you know what I mean, besides being likely to lead to intergalactic clap or AIDS. I'd hate to think of Leia having to be dosed with the SW equivalent of penicillin after her wedding night. To my mind, there's nothing in the least romantic about the type of man some people imagine Han Solo to be.

Michelle Malkin: Again, I agree with almost everything Mickey says here, but there is one point I'd like to not so much disagree with as nitpick. I think Luke not so much simply saw and rejected his Dark Side, as saw and, in a sense, accepted that it was there, while not giving in to it. Without going over the mythical edge, I do see Jungian aspects to ROTJ and that is one of them...Luke accepting his Shadow, an important step toward self-actualization.

I much enjoyed Carole Regine's marvellous analysis of the climatic duel of ROTJ. Yes, I do agree that when Luke says, "I am a Jedi, like my father before me," that this took Vader's mind back to what he was once... and might be still. But I hadn't thought of the possibility that his son being in pain reminded him of his own accident...good point.

((Editor's Note: Martie Benedict has a song called "The Ballad of Traeger Jona" which is about a spacer much like Han, but down on his luck and finally put into a desperate situation in which he chooses to die with courage and honor; I have often thought of the last stanza of her song in relation to what Darth must have been feeling as he watched Luke renounce the Dark. I hope Martie won't mind if I quote it here:

"Now, space is full of tragedies, and songs of grief and loss, the widow's wail and fortune's cruel turns. But sometimes, like a laser flare, amid the darkness and despair, amid the senseless violence, it burns--
A song of triumph in defeat, of one who beats the odds.
A man who has his back against the wall,
Who fights the course that fortune winds, a man who lost and dying finds, the purpose of existence and the meaning of it all."

[copyright Martie Benedict, "The Ballad of Traeger Jona," Starsongs/Lovesongs.]

I think that Darth had a sudden moment of realization in which he saw himself twenty years before, being subjected by Palpatine to much the same thing that Luke was now going through and he realized that it had to end there. I admit to being a Vaderphile long before I was a Hanfan so I, for one, cheered when Darth turned on the Emperor, and his death had me close to tears. Sorry for the long digression here, Pat. Back to you...))

It will be interesting (if Lucas does make the first trilogy) to see the exact nature of Vader's accident. We've all been making assumptions about that volcano, but that isn't, after all, in the films, so it could really turn out to be anything.

At any rate, I'm finding it ironic that ROTJ has turned many Vader fans against the Dark Lord, while it's brought me to admire him for the first time. And not just as Anakin. There's a certain grandeur about the Vader persona, as well, especially in the last half of ROTJ.

Debbie Gilbert: Good point about the Emperor not being Jedi. But that brings up a whole other can of worms...if he's not a Jedi, just what the hell is he? That's the real mystery, isn't it?

Jean Stevenson's idea about Jabba being "enchanted" is marvellous...it's straight from the kind of fairy tale I like the most, though I fear he didn't make a whole lot of progress with getting the Princess to love him. But I do wish Jean would consider an alternate--it would be particularly suited

to her style of writing.

Tim Blaes: I like his list of "what if's". The one about "what if Leia had been put into carbon freeze" is perhaps my favorite. I would love to see a story on that one.

Well, I've taken up quite enough room in your zine, I think. Good luck on future issues--if they're anything like #3, they'll be terrific.



Ellie Uader

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April 24, 1984

Can I be a member of Mary Urhausen's S.P.P.H.S.I.S.? I've gotten a little tired of the Intergalactic Superstud myth of Han Solo myself. Now, those kind of stories have been nixed anyway, but the problem is that the attitudes they reflect seem to have become part of fandom's tradition. Bev Clark mentions the tidbits of information in the novelizations that have become part of that body of tradition. Most of these are either "facts", such as Owen's surname being Lars, or extrapolation, such as the inference of a home planet Corell for Han from his being classed as a Corellian. But Han as Intergalactic Superstud is neither a stated fact nor an extrapolation from specific incidents or statements; it's an interpolation--an alteration, an insertion, a corruption. But despite this, it's become part of the fannish SW tradition. We have to be careful about tradition...it's been treated like canon, but it isn't canon. Remember what Jesus said to the Jews--"Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Matt. 15:6). It's not that tradition is wrong--it's just that the Jews took it too far by adding

to and changing the law with their traditions. Many SW traditions are useful and fill in details that couldn't be given on screen, but we must learn the distinction between tradition and canon. We should be free to accept or reject any part of tradition. I can't prove that Han is not an Intergalactic Superstud, so I can't criticize anyone who wants to think of him that way. I just don't choose to believe it myself because I'm not happy with that characterization and it can't be proved to me with canon.

Speaking of canon, I was glad to see Bev's comments and agree that only the movies should be regarded as canon. In my discussion of canon in #3, I made that clear, but I think what I was really after was a hierarchy of secondary canon. What is secondary canon and what is alternate universe? Where does tradition fit in? What is their order of importance or believability? My tentative list would go like this: (1) "Making Of" books & specials (because they deal with what happened on screen); (2) novelizations; (3) the radio shows; (4) script versions; (5) extrapolated tradition. Under "alternate universe" I file the authorized novels and stories, and interpolated tradition...as I've said before, useful for individual stories if the author cares to use them. ((Editor's Note: Personally, I tend to group the authorized novels and even the storybooks--the Wookiee one in particular--about equal with "extrapolated tradition", since they were written in conjunction with Lucasfilm and therefore must have a handle on "official" information. That is, of course, unless it directly contradicts what we have seen on screen, the primary example being "Splinter of the Mind's Eye," which must be a slip-up on somebody's part.))

Martie Benedict: I missed the comment by Lucas that you refer to, about Luke having made the "final turn to the bad side of the Force," but it seems to me he must have meant the final turn before going back to the good side. That savage attack on Vader was a momentary turn to the dark side; it was fueled by anger and fear, which add up to hatred. And it gave him power--Yoda had said the dark side was "easier...quick

to join you in a fight." Suddenly, Luke was able to beat down Vader, who normally was quite competent against his less experienced son. Luke's return to light immediately after he severs Vader's hand is not, perhaps, as obvious. But if his turning to the dark side was permanent, he certainly would have finished off Vader--that was what the Emperor wanted him to do, in order to solidify that turning. If we assume that the Emperor knows what it takes to turn someone, then Luke falls short of the conditions. He refuses to kill Vader and, turning to the Emperor, assumes a passive role by throwing away his lightsaber--passiveness is also a trait of the light side. And had Luke been on the dark side, I can't help thinking he would have found some way to lash back at the Emperor when he zapped him...and the power, again, would have come quickly, while as a novice Jedi, he couldn't even defend himself. I think I would define "starting down the dark path" as rejecting the light and deciding in your leisure that you want to go the way of the dark side. A momentary lapse such as Luke suffered is not willful--he didn't sit down and decide to attack, he just lost control of himself. So he didn't actually start down the dark path--he just stepped on it for a minute, knowingly, perhaps, and maybe even willingly--but not willfully, with malice aforethought.

I'm becoming a bit bothered by a tendency in many to be so open-minded their brains fall out. The Empire pictured as a valid government because it's "good from its own point of view"; the idea that it would be fine if Luke wanted to go out and have sex with everyone and his bantha; the interpretation of "Question Authority" that says Luke can do what he wants because Ben and Yoda are wrong about everything anyway; these points of view are interesting, perhaps, to speculate about, but they run counter to Lucas' attitudes in the films. The Empire is called evil on screen--in the canon--and not by Rebels, either, but by the narrator (opening rollups). The movies project a fairly traditional morality, and George backs that up by insisting on the same in fanlit. But what I really want to focus on is the

question of authority. Jean L. Stevenson's article questions authority in the right way; asking questions, finding out what the authority means by what he says so that it is more clear in your mind. Several people point out that Luke makes his own choice and takes the responsibility for it. But Ben and Yoda aren't there for nothing. The individual must choose for himself, but if there are no standards, no guidelines, no rules, what does he base his choice on? Luke didn't know what to do while he lived on Tatooine, so he did nothing until Ben came along to tell him what he should do. It was then Luke's choice whether to do it or not. He attained success in ANH by doing what Ben, the authority, said. He was unsuccessful in TESB because he went against Ben and Yoda's advice; he suffered the loss of his hand and suffered under learning Vader's identity as his father in a pressure situation where it caused more agitation than it needed to, and he didn't accomplish the goal for which he defied Ben and Yoda in the first place, namely rescuing Han and Leia, but had to be rescued himself. In ROTJ he does what he's told and faces Vader, and therefore succeeds in becoming a Jedi. "Question Authority" doesn't mean "Defy Authority", and I don't think George meant it to. Certainly Ben and Yoda aren't always right--they're only human and fungus. To question authority means to not accept it on blind faith but to consider it and weigh the alternatives. If you can prove the authority is wrong, fine. But Luke obviously didn't feel very good about going against Ben and Yoda's judgment in TESB--he hadn't proven they were wrong, he was just letting his emotions lead him into a choice in which he had not weighed the alternatives or the possible outcome. Certainly he took the responsibility for that choice; but why, oh why can't man learn from his teachers instead of painful experience? I'd like to see Tim Blaes' what-if story #5--"what if Luke had stayed on Dagobah and not tried to rescue Han, Leia, Chewie and the droids?" I'm sure Han wouldn't have been subjected to carbon freeze, and Lando would probably have rescued them before they could be killed. Already

the outcome is better. No loss of a hand, no time wasted rescuing Han from Jabba, no time lost in becoming a Jedi. Quite a lot of suffering avoided. Call me an authoritarian, but I stand by the Jedi Masters.

Back to Bev Clark, this time on the subject of LoCs. I wonder if the decline in LoCs comes from a feeling in readers that a higher standard is expected than one can produce. Perhaps people are daunted by the erudite tomes of Literary Criticism some of us put out. I guess this is an elaboration of Bev's point #2 (that some fans are intimidated by BNF's and hesitate to write and criticize). But I think her #4 is probably the other major factor--passivity. Add to this the time factor: it seems like once upon a time zines came out more frequently--a given zine would be on a bimonthly or quarterly basis. But with rising expectations of quality, and the boom in mega-zines of up to 500 pages or more, an editor can't get her zine out that quickly. The result is that when you see your own LoC printed, you almost have to go back and re-read the stories to know what you were talking about. And one more thing--sometimes we can read a megazine and not have the foggiest notion where to start LoCing it! And have you ever finished a zine and found you couldn't remember what the first story was about? Not to say we should abolish megazines--they're great! (My only objection to them is I can't afford them.) But maybe we just need a campaign--in the story zines, not the letterzines--to encourage people to write. Tell them how easy it is, perhaps give a few tips. Editors could mention it in their editorials, and maybe even (as finances allow) give a discount for having LoC printed.

((Editor's Note: Another problem to add to the ones you mention above is the tendency in the last few years of zine editors to gear their zines to debut at MediaWest...a sin of which I am guilty myself. This leads to long dry spells with no zines at all, only to be suddenly inundated by them in May. It takes months sometimes to get through them all. In fact I still have one or two of last year's crop that I haven't read and, by the time, SE#4 is in the reader's hands, the 1984

models will be stacked up waiting to be perused. This also leads to tremendous strain on all the editors, writers and artists involved, rushing headlong to meet that deadline. I think artists especially suffer because so many editors are calling on their talents at the same time and all badgering them to hurry-hurry. Again, I am guilty of this and I apologize to all the artists whose work graces the pages of TREMOR IN THE FORCE. I'm not knocking MediaWest because I think it is absolutely great and the one con that fandom NEEDS every year. But I have also vowed that I will never again set up a zine publishing date strictly to coincide with it. From now on, TIF will be published on a floating schedule and to more modest standards. After I regained consciousness from receiving the bids from printers on TIF#1, I decided that it's back to the old collate-it-yourself and staple-it-instead-of-perfect-binding method that so many of us used in the Olden Days. This has the added advantages of saving both me and the buyer money and will allow more frequent publication. Well, I didn't mean to get on a soapbox there, Terri; you just hit a nerve! Back to you...))

To Melody Corbett: I didn't notice the transposition of Tatooine's suns in the sunset in ROTJ from that in ANH--I'm afraid I wasn't looking. But could it be that the planet has made a half-revolution around the suns and is now looking at them from the other side?



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April 23, 1984

I have to admit I didn't care for the new look of issue #3. I don't mind reduced print, but I wish you'd leave a space between paragraphs. It's hard to tell where one sentence ends and another begins.

Barbara Tennison: I think your idea (that someone can be detected only when he is actively using the Force) is valid. It would explain several inconsistencies, such as Vader not realizing that he was torturing his own daughter. The phenomenon could be likened to a radio in a dark room. Unless it is turned on and broadcasting, no one's going to know it's there.

Bev Lorestein: I agreed thoroughly with most of your letter, and now that I think of it, you're right about Mark Hamill being the only one who seemed genuinely interested. Harrison and Carrie tend to joke about the Saga when interviewed, seeing it as just a job, just something to entertain the kiddies.

Cheree: I appreciated your interrupting my letter in order to explain the Supreme Court's position on VCRs, but I had been referring only to audio tapes and theatrical movies. I don't own a VCR. What I do is smuggle a tape recorder into the theater, which is much more risky since you have to evade the ushers who threaten to confiscate your equipment. The VCR people have it easy; they can commit their crimes in the privacy of their own homes. (Ed: true, but I was also referring to those tapes that most of us have in our video collections that are highly contraband and which appear from mysterious sources far down the line!))

Tim Blaes: First of all, congrats on your very sensible letter in STARLOG #82. As for your letter in SE, you echoed my sentiments exactly when you said that it doesn't matter whether people react favorably to your comments; what matters is that they react, period. I was also fascinated by your ten "what-if" stories. Are you into alternate universes? ((Ed: see Tim's letter which follows this one!)) You really should petition your local paper to

start running "Bloom County." I get such a tremendous kick out of that comic every day.

Bev Clark: Re the problem of fans being reluctant to respond with a LoC after reading a very long zine: A recent "monster" zine I received has a questionnaire attached to the last page, so that readers could fill out and return it while the material was still fresh in their minds. I think this is a good idea. Sure, a nice, witty LoC would be more fun for the editor to receive, but a questionnaire is better than no response at all.

Cheree, I enjoyed the interview with Michael Carter. Say "hi" to Thor for me!



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April 21, 1984

Chris Jeffords: Luke could have said, "Well, Dad, this looks like this is it. This is your last chance; you can either let me fry and stay on the Emperor's leash forever, or accept the fact that you can really care for other people and that they are also capable of caring for you. With me, your life will change for the better. What can the Emperor offer you? Choose quickly; I haven't much time left." However, pain can render one inarticulate and expedience dictated a more direct play for his good side.

The general attitude of some fans seems to be that he should have stoically kept his mouth shut and died like a good little Jedi. That he shouldn't have been concerned with his own well-being. Well, if the Jedi had so little interest in staying alive, then it's no wonder that they were wiped out

and the Empire took over.

Mary Urhausen: A long time ago, I had this bright idea that someone could sell women's panties/men's briefs with such messages as "Capt. Kirk Was Here" and "Lt. Uhura Was Here" printed on them. But the more I thought about it, I realized that no one would really buy things like that. Thus endeth my career as a lingerie tycoon.

Yes, it is possible that Luke and Leia had different fathers, but they both would have had to have been conceived not long between each other, wouldn't they? If I'm right, then this implies to me one of two possibilities--their mother fooled around a lot, or she had been raped. ((Ed's Note: Or the twins could have been conceived in vitro and then transplanted into the mother's womb, as is done with increasing frequency today, in which case Lady Skywalker might not even have been their biological mother, just a surrogate. Or she could have been artificially inseminated. Or, in a culture where clone technology is so advanced, the possibilities there stagger the mind!))

I've finally figured out where Leia got that leather dress she was wearing in the Ewok village. The Ewoks are the greatest tailors in the galaxy, and they whipped up that that outfit in less than an hour. I can just see them, taking measurements with vines and branches. Suits While-U-Wait.

Some of Michelle Malkin's comments make me think about what sort of person Luke might have become if he had turned to the Dark Side. I don't think he would have gone the way of Vader. Falling to the Dark Side doesn't always mean you become power-hungry. I think Luke would have become a cynical loner, a Dark Aragog, who would have no Emperor tugging at his leash and who would claim allegiance to no one. And he would be very dangerous.

Jean Stevenson: I still think that if Luke had confronted the Emperor alone Old Maggotbreath would have still fried his fanny.

Marcia Brin: If Luke hadn't kept Vader and the Emperor occupied they might have been more effective at destroying the Rebel Fleet. The Emperor may have been dead the moment the shields went down, but there

was a chance of saving Vader, a possibility that was at least partially realized.

How many of us consider our sibling relationship more important than our relationship with our mate? Well, I ask, how many of you are linked with your brother/sister in the Force? How many think your relationship with your mate is more important than your relationship with your parents? Your children? Each of these relationships has its place, none more important than the other. The Luke/Leia relationship isn't "more" important than the Han/Leia relationship, but I wouldn't dismiss it, if I were you.

You can't reject something you have never experienced. A man who has never experienced temptation is not a man without sin. Luke may have turned to the Dark Side, as Lucas said on the PBS special, but he did not embrace the Dark Side.

There was a female pilot in ROTJ? I missed that! Where?

Would anybody like to start a discussion of the NBC miniseries "V"? SE#4 will be out by the time the first two parts are rerun and the three-part conclusion hits the air. I enjoyed it when it was shown the first time. It was an old tale (Earth invaded by nasty aliens) but the presentation was what pulled it off. I've just finished Ann Crispin's novelization, and if the final six hours are as good as the book then I know I'll not be disappointed.

NBC may think they have ~~wasted their hands~~ finished the story once and for all, but if the "conclusion" is as popular as the first part, then I can see two ways out for them. First, Ann Crispin has already written a sequel with Howard Weinstein, V--East Coast Crisis, out in September. They could film that. And the other 45 or so ships that weren't stationed in the USA might make for an interesting story.

Second, it was left out of the novelization, probably because it wasn't necessary to the plot as it developed, but it was mentioned that the Visitors were at war with another alien world. The good Visitor, Martin, said that we really didn't want to meet them, but an attempt at contact was made. They could be the focus of a sequel. Also, the Visitors might develop a vaccine against the

bacteria and attack Earth again ...just as these other aliens arrive. These other aliens might not care about humans at all; we wouldn't have anything they would want. But then, they might not care if we are in the way, either. So what if they cripple a Visitor ship and it falls on one of our cities? So what if they use chemical weapons that kill us by the thousands? Hey! we don't matter and, if we're in the way, that's just too bad. It could end up the Visitors and Us against Them.

((Editor's Note: I have V on the same tape as "Close Encounters." It's fun to watch the two back-to-back. There really are a lot of similarities! I like to speculate that perhaps the aliens in CE3K are the Visitor's enemies. Also, have you ever read Robert Heinlein's Have Spacesuit--Will Travel? If not, I recommend it. The storyline is similar in some ways to "V". It's one of my all-time favorites.))

I have another list for you; 10 Plausible Cross Universe Stories. The problem with most cross universe stories that I've read so far is that they seldom go anywhere. They use up most of the story just getting the characters to meet and exchange pleasantries. If Captain Kirk were to meet Captain Solo, then they better have a good reason to explain how they could meet and they had better do something to make that meeting worthwhile. Here's my list:

1. Dr. Who and Just About Anybody; the TARDIS is the ultimate cross universe device. But let's be specific. How about Dr. Who and the Avengers? Dr. Who and Steed vs. Daleks. I wonder how Emma and Leela would get along. Who and Blake's 7 might work also.

2. An adult Barry (CE3K) meets an adult Elliot. Close Encounters of the ET Kind.

3. Snake Plissken and Mad Max. Kurt Russell himself suggested this one. ((Ed: Hey, I like this one!))

4. Voyagers meet the Time Bandits. ((Ed: Or Doug and Tony in the Time Tunnel.))

5. Battlestar Galactica arrives at Buck Rogers Earth. If things had gone right, this might have happened for real, if NBC had bought BG. It would have made more sense than both shows' second seasons.

6. Firefox meets Blue

Thunder.

7. Questor meets Gary Seven. Roddenberry strikes back. ((Ed: And they both get trapped in a cave-in at Carlsbad Caverns and wake up in PAX headquarters two hundred years from now.))

8. Superman and the Lost Ark. Lana Lang's father in the comicbooks was an archaeologist. Maybe the movie Lana has an uncle/cousin Indy. What if Luthor found that big warehouse?

9. Star Wars meets Tolkien. The Millennium Falcon overjumps in hyperspace and comes to Earth--Middle Earth!

10. "V" meets the Bionic Woman. Both shows were produced (I think) by Kenneth Johnson, and they seem to have a similar "feel". Can you imagine what the Visitors would do to the OSI? Jaime Somers on the Run.

If there is one zine I'd like to see it's one that specializes in cross universe stories. If anybody does, I'll be glad to contribute.



Bev Lorenstein
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One heck of a good ish, Cheree. It gave me lots to comment on. And the articles were enjoyable. I first read Terri Black's article which was enjoyable. Also enjoyed "Birth of an Ewok". Stevenson's article I found sarcastic about the authority bit but interesting from a personal point of view. I liked the interview with Michael Carter. I always did wonder what a minor film character went through and felt about his or her part in a major movie.

Mary Urhausen: What a refreshing letter! Bright and

cheerful with a defense for Luke which struck a harmonious chord with me! The anti-Luke Light-side folks think they KNOW the truth and need to enlighten us, but I think all they know is how to elaborate on personal opinion which is negative and fabricated fantasy which is far from Lucas or his audience's reality. And all they have for defense is sarcasm and to use brow-beating. Where did the fun go? I, for one, intend to ignore their silly arguments and get on to other things.

By the way, Karen Ripley is great. She sent me a submission which is fantastic.

Friend Malkin, defender of the JUST and GOOD. You are friend of friends, for one and all in fandom who are sane. (And even the insane once in a while; guess I should know, hey?) Oh, yes, friend, when I'm in despair, you are there! (Han and Luke fans should stick together, not tear one character down for another!) Getting corny, but what else is there to do after reading Church of Ford letters? Anyway, us Luke fen are known to be corny. We learned it from the "kid."

Yeah, Harrison is ALL man, alright. He's chunky through and through with raisons and nuts (guess which parts of the anatomy they are?)...yummy! What a delicious delectable piece of the action! ((Ed: hey, let's watch that stuff! This is a family letterzine!))

Barb Tennison: I agree with you. There should have been a scene with Leia acknowledging her feelings about Vader being her father. But, heck, there should have been LOTS more scenes. If I had my way, the whole saga would have had another film added to make room for all those missing parts.

But, you know, I wonder most about Han. He doesn't even know about Luke's hand being cut off, according to the shown scenes! Of course, we must surmise that he does and that, if he doesn't, he will sooner or later. This is Lucas film style. He leaves room for one's own interpretation to take place. He also puts special effects before personal interspection at times. They are not what I consider very important but SX are important to many other fans.

And you are another fan who doesn't like those cute Ewoks. My friend Linda literally grits

her teeth when they are on screen. She said they should have been either primitive OR cute, but not both! I enjoyed them tremendously. They reminded me of a cross between Hokas and Fuzzies. And I love the bit against technology and the authority.

Debbie Gilbert: Right on! For Luke to die passively without seeking help would simply be dumb. The people supporting this viewpoint either have little emotion for sympathy or have no concept on how to react to life threatening circumstances. Force or no Force, pain is pain. I think even Yoda would ask for help if he was faced with an evil power stronger than himself. It would be only logical, as Spock would say!

Tim Blaes: I enjoyed your letter tremendously. I think Leia will be a source of great power in the future. But for what capacity, I wonder? This makes for great speculation in fan fiction. And I'd like to read stories about the OTHER strong women in power. So far, there have been many powerful females introduced in alternate SW's universes. How about in the real one?

Right on about emotions! I think a lot of feelings and thoughts which are never expressed openly (perhaps not even consciously known) blurt out from an incident which sparks hidden emotions from within one's own subconscious memory. What comes out can be used for or against the circumstances or person depending upon the time, place and situation. But anyway emotionally, Leia would have no personal love lost for Darth Vader/Anakin Skywalker because she never knew him. Bail Organa was the father she grew up with, therefore, he is the father she personally loved.

"There is good in you" is a flat statement and that is a problem for many fans because they do not write or conceive things in a flat way. A statement such as this can be deciphered by various interpretations if one wishes to do so. Yet, in reality, it is just merely a statement. I wish more fans would understand that between Lucas' world and their own, there is a galaxy of difference!

Carole Regine: I too was impressed by the Vader/Luke confrontation. You hit it right on with hatred born out of love.

That sort of hatred can easily be turned into compassion because the feelings stem from protection and care for another being other than oneself.

I think unselfish motives can only help the mind and heart (the soul?) out of a vile state of self-loathing and lust for power. We see this example when Vader/Anakin turns to the Light Side and when Luke rejects the Dark Side for the Light Side's true power.

Bev Clark: I disagree with you on the Christian outlook. I believe love is what Christ's sacrifice was all about. The sacrificial act of blood-letting is replaced by Force-energy-letting. The person substitute in this middle trilogy is Darth Vader/Anakin who dies for Imperial/Jedi sins. I know it isn't proven yet, but how could the Jedi as an order have fallen unless there was something wrong within it? And Darth Vader's death as Imperial pawn signifies the beginning of the end of galaxy wide doom. Anakin's death signifies the end of the beginning of personal conflict (the choice is made). Darth and Anakin are united and integrated beyond the realm of life. By his life sacrifice, his son can reconstruct the Empire and Jedi. The government and its people can be as one again, united in body and soul, with the Guardians protecting and guiding. THIS is what Luke Skywalker will be working for in the future: Transforming the Empire into a free republic, or perhaps something else even better, and the Jedi with the Force from a dead order/religion into a strong, viable, LIVING one.

In my opinion, Luke does not love his father on a personal level. How could he? He never knew the man! But Anakin/Vader does represent more than just a father figure to Luke. He is his lost heritage, symbolizing Luke's own identity crisis with the Light and Dark within and the final choice to be made. With Luke's need to intergrate both sides of his personality as well as the blend of consciousness and subconscious (and then there's the unconscious!), we have a view of Luke Skywalker through the saga as a symbol of Jedi manifestation in the Force. He emerges from the womb of the super-conscious (which can be termed as God, the Void, the

Absolute, Shiva or Brahman, or the Mystic Law) and comes out triumphant. The same occurs with his father. The difference here is, one is at the end of the conflict but his life sacrificed, as the other is at the end of conflict but is alive due to this life sacrifice.

To summarize: Luke Skywalker chooses the Lightside, Evolution and Life as his destined path. WHO Luke Skywalker loves is really secondary to loving life itself FOR itself, and having the capacity to share this love with the rest of the galaxy.



Susan W. Henderson
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April 28, 1984

Hurrah for Tim Blaes! You can't imagine how refreshing it is to an old feminist like me to hear men rejecting the "real men don't cry" syndrome. Keep it up, brother--it's good for your cardiovascular system.

I think that some of the readers are misinterpreting Karen Osman's statements about Vader and Luke. Karen does not look down on love, but she has a very demanding concept of honor, that requires complete sacrifice of private feeling to public duty. From this point of view, Vader would indeed be derelict in his duty were he to side with a son who is in armed revolt against the lawful government, whose chief military commander Vader is. (As an aside: has it occurred to anyone that, from Vader's point of view, Luke is an embarrassment? A parallel case would be an officer of the Joint Chiefs of Staff discovering that he has a son in the Red Brigades or the Ku Klux Klan.) Karen is quite right in saying that Vader and Luke have no basis for a love

relationship on any but the most abstract level, because they don't know one another.

For myself, I can think of two possible reasons why Vader might feel some obligation to Luke. Firstly, Vader may come from a society where people are expected to put blood ties before political allegiance. (Another aside: we know absolutely nothing about Vader's ethnic origins, or the rest of his personal life for that matter. The man seems to exist in a vacuum, which makes it fiendishly difficult to analyze his character.) Secondly, he may feel some obligation to Luke simply because he is Luke's biological father, even if they have no personal relationship. If this is so, when faced with a choice between his son and an Emperor who has betrayed him and whose senility makes him a menace to the Body Politic (as witness his disastrous tactical dispositions before and during the battle over Endor), it is believable that Vader should choose Luke.

A propos of Vader's supposed change of sides: we are apparently supposed to think this has happened, but nowhere is it stated outright. Since even a plain declaration like "Darth Vader killed your father" can turn out to be "from a certain point of view" in this universe, we certainly need not accept a mere implication at supposed face value. What Vader actually said was, "You already have [saved me]. You were right about me. Tell your sister you were right." Right about what? Luke said of Vader, "I can turn him back to the good side." "There is good in him." "He won't turn me over to the Emperor." The last statement was ultimately correct; Vader killed the Emperor rather than let him kill Luke. Whether the rest was correct depends on one's definition of "good." If my speculation is correct, Vader may be saying, "You were right; I did fulfill my obligation as your blood relative." Or he may be saying, "You were right. George Lucas is saying here that political morality, like charity, begins at home and the cause of Peace and Justice is served by caring for those next to one. I have come to agree with that, as you already do." None of this is necessarily incompatible with loyalty to the Empire. We don't know where the Empire stands on

the issue of public versus private obligations. In fact, we still don't know any more than we did at the beginning of ANH, what the Empire's political program is at all. All we've been told is that the Rebels are fighting for "freedom" and "justice", which the Empire is supposedly against. As we all know, "freedom" and "justice" mean differing things for each person who uses the words. Do the Rebels mean "freedom" to criticize the government without being carried off by a secret police force, or do they mean "freedom" not to pay taxes to support old-age pensions and public health services, or something else entirely? Vader can say to Luke, "You were right about me" and still be in profound disagreement with him in the matter of political ideology.



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SE#3 was a good, long issue, with many interesting things to comment upon.

To Mary Urhausen: When you ask where the myth of Han Solo as Superstud came from, let's first define our terms. Do we mean a compulsive love 'em and leave 'em type who flees from commitment? (I personally don't espouse that view myself.) Or do we mean a man who's not averse to a little bit of fun with the ladies and enjoys an active sex life?

True, I think the fevered imaginings of horny fan writers have had a lot to do with inflating the idea to such, er, heroic proportions, but the germ of it had to come from somewhere in the original "canonical" sources.

The first indication that Han might be a ladies' man comes from the cantina scene in the novelization of ANH, in which a humanoid "wench" is seated on Han's lap as Luke and Obi-Wan

approach the table, and she is grinning widely at something he has just whispered in her ear. In the film itself, we have Han's generally provocative manner towards Leia, epitomized by that saucy wink during the medal ceremony. Han has all the earmarks of a man who comes on to women as a matter of course. As the old joke goes, nine times out of ten he would get his face slapped, but on that tenth! And then we have incidents from the Daley books: Han's taking Jessa into his coat at the end of HAN SOLO AT STAR'S END, showing that he's capable of the sort of sweet, lover-like gesture women appreciate; his grumbling at Piolla's "frustrating tendency to keep her stateroom door locked during the liner's night," meaning that he was not above trying it uninvited (HAN SOLO'S REVENGE); and a hint that Han doesn't always exercise perfect wisdom in his dealings with the fair sex--"several of their [Han and Chewie's] less auspicious adventures had begun just this way," (HAN SOLO AT STAR'S END). So there you have it--not a case of unbridled satyriasis, but not exactly a monk either.

I too disagree that Han would inevitably cheat on Leia. In fact, quite the contrary: a lot of wild oat sowing makes it easier to remain faithful after marriage, all that freedom having taught that casual sex is not all that it's cracked up to be.

To Tim Blaes: I've read the story about the gaffer's tape twice now, once in Carrie Fisher's interview in PLAYBOY and once in Dale Pollock's SKYWALKING, Lucas' unofficial biography, so I guess it must be true. What's more, according to Fisher in SKYWALKING, George Lucas was too embarrassed to broach the subject to Carrie himself, so he sent Gary Kurtz to tell her. Fortunately, she seems to have taken it in good humor, even to the point of jokingly suggesting a contest in which the lucky winning stagehand would get to remove the tape at the end of the day's shooting. Which brings me to...

Jean Stevenson: Your point is well taken. I was speaking with a fair amount of cynicism caused by the infamous Lucasfilm censorship flap, and perhaps I was unduly influenced by the abovementioned SKYWALKING, which says that, "Lucas simply didn't

want sexuality in his fairy tale --no mushy stuff."

Your theory about Leia's growth from child to woman in the three films is interesting, but since Leia has been revealed to be Luke's sister, she should be about twenty years old in ANH, approximately the age Fisher was when she made the film, so their physical development should match as well. And it was my understanding that the tape was to control motion, not size. "No breasts bounce in space, there's no jiggling in the Empire." (Carrie Fisher, quoted in SKYWALKING.) You'll note that, with all the skin her slavegirl costume showed in ROTJ, nothing bounced in that steel brassiere she was wearing. ((Editor's Note: They weren't entirely successful in ANH. If you'll check out the scene right after Luke, Han and the other pilots come back from destroying the Death Star, the three of them walk off camera with the guys' arms around Leia's shoulders and she's really doing a dance there! I remember Carrie saying in an interview that they got in trouble over that scene--but she didn't say in trouble from whom.))

The key word in my admittedly careless phrase was "denial of basic sexuality"--basic, as it applies to the earthier elements of the subject. In other words, it's all right to show cleavage, but not all right to have it bounce. And it's okay to give your heroes tight clothing and a macho strut (frankly, I don't think the latter was intentional--I defy anyone to keep Harrison Ford from looking sexy by any means short of throwing a bag over him) and to do cute little schticks about masculine rivalry and courtship games, but it's not okay to hint too strongly at the brass-tacks of what is going to happen between Han and Leia when they finally get together in bed, or in the ferns...or wherever it is they are headed at the close of ROTJ.

My goodness, what a lot of wasted ink over such a trivial subject! All I meant to say was that those kisses between Han and Leia were strangely lacking in intensity--almost like those kiddie-westerns in which Hopalong Cassidy chastely kisses the schoolmarm on the cheek and they gallop off into the sunset, seemingly with nothing racier in mind than sharing a homemade

apple pie once they get back to the ranch house. I suppose that is appropriate, given the Saturday Matinee flavor of the SW saga, but it didn't quite ring true to me in this instance.



Mary Urhausen
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April 27, 1984

You've done it again--another terrific issue of SOUTHERN ENCLAVE! The very day #3 came, I forsook all others and buried myself in it and was not heard from for the rest of the night! 'Round about page 12, though, I began to think, "What the hell bozo wrote this??" Then I realized that the Bozo was ME... So, I promise, no ten-page tome this time. (I've got the feeling that #4 will prove the new adage--which I've just coined--that you can't offend all of the people all of the time and still expect to sell them your zine!!)

Instead of tackling all of the intriguing topics broached in #3, or girding myself in defense for what people are bound to say about my last letter (ouch!), I just want to throw in my 2¢ worth on one subject. Actually, it's a very important subject; a crucial subject, even. I address this to no one in particular--and to all of us: HEY! LIGHTEN UP, GANG!! Let's take the saga seriously (why not? It's more fun than real life--whatever that is--much of the time!), but let's not take ourselves and our holy opinions quite so seriously. When and if this ceases to be fun, there won't be much pleasure left in it. I love controversy and I relish disagreement. (Obviously; otherwise I wouldn't be so deliriously willing to make an ass of myself in public print!)

And I'll confess to a secret fondness for all the letters in SE and the other letterzines that really stand me on my ear and astound me with their controversial points of view. I love reading ideas that conflict with my own (yeah, yeah--even you guys who are always trashing Luke!); anything that conflicts with my own beliefs forces me to re-examine my own values and usually reinforces what I believe. And--shock!--sometimes I even change my mind! (I know there are those of you out there who think that if I could change my mind, I should jump at the chance to trade in this clunker I have right now, but...) So, let the battle rage--but let's not shoot ourselves in the foot in the process. I want to know what you think about the characters and ideas in the saga, not who you think is the biggest jerk in fandom.



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SHOOTING STAR #2--The original Mark Hamill zine! "Like an Unfinished Symphony" by Linda Knights. There is one Jedi left besides Luke, but the young Jedi's search leads to unusual circumstances. "Pilgrimage" by Lee Vibber. The Force seems to have deserted Luke after his victory over the Death Star...or has it? Art by Cargill, McPherson, Lane, Jenni and much more. Cover by Karen River! \$4.00 and SASE will reserve your copy. Due out for MediaWest. Galactic Winds Press, Jeanine Hennig, 510 Alva, Grand Prairie, TX 75051.

SKYWALKER #5. Finally available! Consists of "Counterpoint--the Battle for Rynan," by Maggie Nowakowska, a Thousand Worlds novel. Art by Martynn and J. Mullins. SASE Bev Clark, 744 Belmont Place East #203, Seattle, WA 98102.

THE OLD REPUBLIC READER. Quarterly, 20 pp, comp-typed, short illoed SW fic., poetry, toons, comics, articles. Dec. '83 issue includes full page of exclusive photos of Mark Hamill in NYC. TORR is available for \$1.75/issue or \$6/4 from Suzy Sansom, 376 Granada Drive, So. San Francisco, CA 94080. Editor is seeking filler art submissions--please help. Planning to devote 1/2 of Sept. '84 issue to "Temple of Doom". Those contributions accepted til Aug. 10, 1984. SASE for more info.

THE WOOKIEE COMMODE plunges onward, flush with success! Curious to see if this zine is as outrageous as my puns are?! We have a Han-tastic cover by Karen River; the world's weirdest logo; and art, fiction, poetry, and some barely-serious articles by a real gang of crazies who have no shame. See us at Media-WestCon--yes, we will have the nerve to show up! Or SASE and \$5.00 to Dr. Mary Urhausen, 42 Three Mile Road, Racine, WI 53402. Remember, our motto is: "Something to offend absolutely everyone!" (Oops! Not you, George!)

VHF-THE COMPLETE BOOK OF LYRICS. All the lyrics to all of Martie Benedict's songs celebrating the many film roles of Harrison Ford. Art by Wanda Lybarger and Carlotta Vaughan. A must for fans of Martie's songs! \$12.00 fc. Martie Benedict, Box 89, Eckert, CO 81418-0089.

Coming Soon to a Galaxy Near You

A TREMOR IN THE FORCE #2 is now accepting contributions. So far, we have stories by Martie Benedict, T. S. Weddell, Linda Knights, Carolyn Gollodge and Cheree Cargill. We also hope to feature work by Susan Matthews, Marcia Brin, Patricia D'Orazio, J. A. Berger, Jeanine Hennig, and other top names in SW fandom! Art by Wanda Lybarger, Jenni, Nancy Stasulis and

other favorite artists! This is not necessarily a Hanzine. We would like stories dealing with all the major characters! Deadline is August 1, zine due around the end of the year (no firm date yet). If you're interested in contributing, SASE Cheree Cargill, 457 Meadowhill Dr., Garland, TX 75043.

CIRCLE OF LIGHT--"We're crazy, you know!" is the motto of Jumeau Press, which is proud to present the newest in the line of SW fanzines. Issue #1 in progress with "The Other Shoe", "Corellian Alliance", "Grandstand", and "First Time". Still accepting submissions for issues #1 and beyond. Looking for artists as well. And if you're just interested in buying, send a SASE. Everything goes to Jumeau Press, c/o L. A. Carr, 2720 Exuma Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33406.

COLLECTED CIRCLE OF FIRE. The schedule for Circle of Fire has been set back due to: 1. incredible demands of overtime in Anne Elizabeth Zeek's job, which is giving her little or no time to write, and 2. finishing up TIME WARP, which is also making demands on Anne's time. She hopes that things will lighten up enough to allow it to come out by the end of this year. I, personally, don't feel like predicting the crime rate of NYC with such preciseness (for those who don't know, Anne is a probation officer), so all I'll say on the subject is that it will come out as soon as Anne can manage it. Mundane life, after all, must come first. Thanks for understanding. Pat Nussman, 5851-C Western Run Dr., Baltimore, MD 21209.

DECEPTIVE JOURNEY--Legal cargo hauls were unexciting or so Han Solo thought. He had been wrong before. An adventure tale spiced with excitement, romance, and galactic wonders. SASE for flyer. DeVan Press, 1108 Pepper Dr., Madisonville, KY 42431.

ERRANTRY #2--a media-oriented fanzine edited by Regina Gottesman, features fiction and poetry based on ST, SW, M.U.N.C.L.E., St. Elsewhere, Blake's 7, Rat Patrol, Knight Rider, Voyagers!, and Remington Steele, as well as original fantasy. Writers include Adsit, Reitz, Hintze, Kirby, Nussman, Matthews, Sullivan. Artists include Cash,

Dunster, Martynn, Siegrist, Walske, eluki. Tentative publication date: May 1984. \$5.00 and SASE (overseas SAE & 2 IRCs) to reserve. Make checks payable to Strelsau Press, 100 West 94 St., New York, NY 10025. European agent: Janet Ellicott, 43 Brooksbank House, Retreat Place, Morning Lane, Hackney E9 6RN England. Errantry #1 is sold out and will not be reprinted.

GUARDIAN 6 contains ST/SW/UNCLE/RLA/ET fiction by Brin, Carraher, Ecklar, Gonzales, Johansen, Kirby, Knights, Osman and others. Poetry by Gatonspaulis, Bowles; art by O'Neill, Reitz, and River. Plus much more. Looking for small filler cartoons. Due in spring '84. To reserve: \$3.00 and SASE. Make checks payable to Mazeltough Press, P.O. Box 248, Wayzata, MN 55391.

KESSEL RUN #4--SW fiction, articles, poetry and artwork by Agel, Benedict, Brin, Edwards, Laymon & Goldstein, Hennig, Matthews, Hines-Stroede, Molitor, Nussman, Sibley, Taero, Adolf, Zeek, Lorenstein, Varesano, Drake, Dunster, Martynn, Cargill, Faraci, Low, Lybarger, Ludwig, Stasulis, Rosenthal, Wells, etc. Includes "Sword of Darkness, Sword of Light" by Patricia D'Orazio--the Emperor still lives and chaos reigns; "Old Friends and Acquaintances" by Carol Hines-Stroede--Lando and Vader must work together to save a space station; "Novitiate" by Jeanine Hennig--Luke returns to Tatooine to train and do some heavy soul-searching; and "Life-Line" by A. E. Zeek--Han and Leia must rescue Luke from the Imps with the help of Han's old friend Alain, also known as Dracula. To reserve a copy, please send \$10 deposit and SASE to Michelle Malkin, 6649 Castor Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19149.

KNIGHT'S LADY, or THE STEED'S TALE--a Knight Rider novel by Sheryl Adsit, edited by Regina Gottesman. The first fan novel (as far as we can determine) written from the point of view of a car--and what a car! Who else could discuss the relationship of dreams to reality while negotiating the Santa Monica Freeway at rush hour? Or establish that computers do, indeed, need love too? Tentative date: winter/spring 1984. \$5.00 and

SASE (overseas SASE & 2 IRCs) to reserve. Make checks payable to Strelsau Press, 100 West 94 Street, New York, NY 10025. European agent: Janet Ellicott, 43 Brooksbank House, Retreat Place, Morning Lane, Hackney E9 6RN England.

LEGENDS OF LIGHT #2--Fiction-- Aspengren, Bratton, Brin, Bruce, Jeffords, Mularski, Noel, Voll, Walker, more; **Art--Burnside,** Drake, Dunster, Eldred, Hennig, Lybarger, Martynn, McPherson, Morey, Sansom, more. ROTJ-based material included. Due out Spring 1984. \$5 and SASE to reserve to: POOZ Press, c/o Susan Voll, 3040 Alta View Dr., #D-103, San Diego, CA 92139. Checks payable to Susan Voll. Another big one! (LoL #1 is sold out. Xeroxed copies may be available if there is enough interest. SASE for details.)

MELANGE III--Due Spring '84. Will include the sequel to "Edge of the Blade", fiction by Benedict, D'Orazio, Agel, Stevenson, Hill; TV script by Graham; poetry by Brayton, Taero, Agel. Art by Barbara Fister-Liltz. For price and flyer, please write to: Pandora Publications, c/o Joan B. Shumsky, 24 Meehan Avenue, Raritan, NJ 08869.

ONCE UPON A GALAXY by Twin Suns Enterprises. New SW fanzine to be published this year. The main story is called "Skywalking" by Tom Clarke and Julie Phipps. We need short stories, poems, filksongs, art, etc. Contributors will receive a free copy. Julie Phipps, 47 Cotswold Avenue, Duston, Northampton, NN5 6DP, England.

PERCEPTIONS--A new fanzine dedicated to Harrison Ford. We are currently accepting submissions from authors and artists involving any Ford characterization. All stories must conform to Lucasfilm guidelines. Deadline June 1, 1984. Publication date, Fall, 1984. SASE for info. Devan Press, 1108 Pepper Dr., Madisonville, KY 42431.

THE MILLENNIUM FALCON CASEBOOK is a thematic one-shot seeking contris; SASE for guidelines. **BRIGHTSTAR IN GLORY**, the only mainline Brightstar Universe novel will take the Lucas/Brightstar cast through their analog of ROTJ; written by Christine Jeffords, planned for

May '85 debut, and now accepting SASEs. Phantom Press, Christine Jeffords, 630 Bloomfield Ave., Verona, NJ 07044.

XANADU--a new mixed-media zine from Falcon Press! We are looking for material from your favorite universes--SW, ST, Who, Raiders, H. Ford, Simon & Simon, Remington Steele, MUNCLE, Alias Smith & Jones, Magnum PI, you name it! Got a nifty-neato story but can't find a zine to publish it? Give us a try! Our purpose is to spotlight the eclectic! Artists--if you are interested in trying something besides SW or ST, let us know! R-rated material is okay if it has something to do with the story, but please NO K/S, same sex, kink, hurt/comfort or X-rated stuff. If interested, SASE Xanadu, c/o Falcon Press, 457 Meadowhill, Garland, TX 75043.

OTHER Words

AM LOOKING FOR good photos to draw from of Leia, Luke, Dayna and Cally of B7, Joyce and Pay of HSB, Margaret of MASH, Laura of RS, Sapphire of SS, Cagney and Lacey, Ripley of ALIEN and Saavik. S. Necchi, 73 Campbell St., Fall River, MA 02723.

AUCTION: I am selling off selected items from my collection of zines and memorabilia. Includes SW, ST, Pern, other media. This is a new auction list containing many items not in my previous offering. SASE Christine Jeffords, 630 Bloomfield Ave., Verona, NJ 07044.

BACK ISSUES OF SF MAGAZINES (Starlog, Fantastic Films, etc.) 1978-1981. Also SW toys & cards; paperbacks on SW, ST, Battlestar Galactica, etc. for sale. Or will trade for SW, SW, Doctor Who zines, DW novels and other DW and Tom Baker items. Please send SASE for list. Gayle Johnson, Rt. 4, Box 64, Chatsworth, GA 30705.

CAMERA WANTED: Betamax video camera. I'm going to make a Star Wars movie and I need a Betamax video camera. Will be kept clean, protected and well taken care of. Will be used for 4 or 4-1/2 months. Jim Luoma, 7919 North Main, Dayton, OH 45415.

COSTUMES MADE: Do you long to stun them at a masquerade? Can't sew or can't find the time? Christine Jeffords, well-known SW writer and editor, announces that her mother (many years' experience seamstressing) is ready, willing and able to create costumes to your design and measurements. Simple and complex undertaken; not limited to SW. For further information and a measurements chart, please SASE Mabel W. Semos, 630 Bloomfield Ave., Verona, NJ 07044.

CUSTOM-MADE BUMPER STICKERS! Day-glo orange on black. Make your message known! \$1.50 and long SASE each. No obscenities please. SASE Cheree Cargill, 457 Meadowhill Dr., Garland, TX 75043.

FORD FANS--PLEASE HELP US put down a star on the "Stars Walk of Fame" in Hollywood for Harrison Ford. We are nearing our required \$3,000 but we still need your help! All contributors will have their name put on a scroll which will be presented to Harrison. This has now been approved by his manager, Pat McQueeney. Strict records are kept of contributions and passed along to Mr. Ford's secretary for their records. Also collecting letters from fans stating why they feel Mr. Ford deserves his own star that will be relayed to the nominating committee. Any and all contributions are appreciated. Check or money order to: Ruth Scott-Special Account, PO Box 380544, San Antonio, TX 78280.

GUARDIAN #1, #2 and #3 are now out of print and will not be reprinted. See ads for Guardian #4, #5 and #6 elsewhere in the Marketplace for info.

I AM OFFERING fair, honest zine reviews in return for free or postage-only copies. Will accept defective copies and will provide copy of review before publication. Am also offering experienced, complete proofreading in return for contrib copy. Sandra Necchi, 73 Campbell St., Fall River, MA 02723.

I AM INTERESTED in purchasing copies of SKYWALKER 1-4, GUARDIAN 2-3, TIME WARP 3 and FAR REALMS 1-2. If anyone can help me obtain new or used copies of these issues, I would appreciate

it they would write to me. Marlene Karkoska, 656 S. Belvoir Blvd., South Euclid, OH 44121.

"I'M STILL PLAYING CATCH-UP!"
An out of print reproduction service. The following zines are available by editorial permission: **CROSSED SABERS**, **DOCKING BAY**, **PACETS**, **MOS EISLEY CHRONICLE**. Coming soon: **ARCHEOLOGY 101**, **EMPIRE REVIEW**, **FAR REALMS**. Editors inquiries welcomed. SASE for flyer. De-Van Press, 1108 Pepper Dr., Madisonville, KY 42431.

LOOKING TO BUY (will even take xerox copies) the following zines: **Kessel Run #1**, **Twin Suns #1**, **Carbonite Maneuver**, **Solo**. Also have several zines for sale. SASE for list. **Thekla Kurth**, 851 N. Pheasantbrook Cir., Centerville, UT 84014.

MARK HAMILL SOCIETY U.K.--Enthusiastic group of British Hamill fans! Their excellent newsletter, **SHOOTING STAR** (not affiliated with the fanzine of the same name published by Galactic Winds Press), contains lots of information about Mark and his many roles. Please enclose a self-addressed envelope and 2 IRC's when inquiring. Please send no US stamps since they cannot be used overseas to return mail. Address correspondence to: **Loraine Birch**, 89 Wrights Way, South Wonston, Winchester, Hampshire, SO21 3HE, England.

NEEDED: all of the British SW comics that feature the "Raiders of the Void!" plot (Goodwin story, Golden art). Will borrow and

return or buy for \$1.00 each. 50¢ all other British SW comics. Write **Tim Blaes**, Route 6, Box 294, Hendersonville, NC 28739.

NIMOY FANS! Please help us honor Mr. Nimoy by raising money to have a star put down on the "Stars Walk of Fame" in Hollywood. We are about halfway to our needed \$3,000. For info SASE **Esther Lemay**, 222 Malibu Dr., Lewisville, TX 75067.

ROTJ Pens 50¢ each. Please send a long SASE with each order. I can send up to 4 pens for one 20¢ stamp. If more than 4 pens are ordered, please add another 20¢ stamp to the envelope. **Carol Peters**, P.O. Box 5353, Salton City, CA 92275.

STAR TREK STATIONERY. Beautifully drawn portraits of Kirk, Spock, McCoy, Scotty, Uhura, Saavik, etc. by Lacey. Each set contains ten sheets of elegantly designed stationery expertly printed on fine tinted paper. \$2.00 per set. Envelopes not included. For more information, SASE **Cheri Tripp**, 24 Humboldt St. 17F, Brooklyn, NY 11206.

STATIONERY with or without matching bookmarkers in six pastels, with six of your favorite SF/fantasy themes (ST, SW, dragons, Dr. Who, etc.) Stationery-\$5.00; Bookmarkers-Set of six \$1.50; Stationery with bookmarkers-\$7.50 ppd to **Della Williamson**, PO Box 61521, Vancouver, WA 98666.

VHF

Harrison Ford-inspired songs by

Martie Benedict. Ten tapes featuring Han, Indy, Kenny, Rick, Tommy and others. SASE Box 89, Eckert, CO 81418-0089.

WOULD LIKE TO BUY copies of the following zines: **Warped Space 39-44**, **Time Warp 3**, **Revisions 1-4**, **Moonbeam 3**, and **Scum and Villainy**. Please write if you can help! And many thanks to **Bev and Jacqueline** for selling me out of print zines at wonderful, fair prices. **Ann Wortham**, P.O. Box 421, Cedar Hill, TX 75104.

ZINE SALE. Many SW, ST, Battlestar Galactica and other media oriented zines for sale at or below cost. SASE for list. **Ann Wortham**, P.O. Box 421, Cedar Hill, TX 75104.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

MARK HAMILL SOCIETY, U.K.
Loraine Birch
89 Wrights Way
South Wonston
Winchester, Hampshire
SO21 3HE, England.

Janice Snipes
9520 Ferguson #1055
Dallas, TX 75228

Sharon Dickerson
8809 Southwestern #2210
Dallas, TX 75206

Liz Sharpe
6020 Westchester Park Dr. #T-2
College Park, MD 20740

Linda Knights
3374 South Forty
Weatherford, TX 76086

OTHER WORDS

First, a correction from last issue. The artist listed as "Karen Fisher" should read "Karen Finch"! So sorry, Karen! Guess I was thinking Carrie Fisher when I was typing that!

Alas and alack! Reaganomics are upon us. As of this issue, I have been forced to raise prices, much though I would have preferred not to. But after sitting down with my trusty calculator and doing some hard figuring, I came to the unhappy conclusion that I am losing over a dollar a copy at the old price of \$2.00 an issue. Therefore, since I can only afford to keep doing this as long as it pays for itself and since I do want to keep doing this, I am forced to raise the price to \$3.50 an issue, or \$10.50 for three issues, or \$14.00 for a year. I realize that this is a hefty price hike, but SE costs me around \$300 to print, plus 71¢ a copy postage, and that's not counting reduction costs which vary per issue. So, I hope you'll

feel it's justified. I truly am sorry but hope you'll feel SE is worth it.

IN SYMPATHY

We at **SOUTHERN ENCLAVE** would like to express our heart-felt sympathies to **Laura Virgil**, who lost her sister in an automobile accident, March 16. I'm sure **Laura** would appreciate your special thoughts and prayers at this tragic and difficult time in her life.

Editor and Publisher:
Cheree T. Cargill
457 Meadowhill Drive
Garland, TX 75043

Subscription Price: \$3.50 single issue
\$10.50/3 issues.

Please specify issue starting number. Some back issues available for \$2.00 each. SE#1 is sold out.

Deadline for #5 -- August 1, 1984

Dear Readers:

Last issue, Ann Wortham posted a consumer complaint against Jani Hicks, in that Ann had ordered xerox copies of Twin Suns 1 & 2 several months ago, sending Jani a check for \$30 but had never heard anymore and had never received a reply. Ann has now forwarded the letter below, reproduced verbatim with the note, "What do you make of this?" I'm not sure either but felt it was important to pass it along to all of you.

P. O. Box 5653
Berkeley, CA 94705

To Whom It May Concern:

Since October, 1983, I have been handling the affairs of Sara J. Hicks, who is no longer among us. Among her papers were a number of threatening letters from persons whom she had allegedly defrauded regarding reprints of her defunct fanzine.

Her financial affairs are still nothing short of chaotic, and as of now her resources are completely nil.

However, recently I have again received letters addressed to her containing such things as threats to involve the postal authorities over the ASTRONOMICAL amount of thirty dollars; and I have therefore resolved to restore to those who have been So Damanged their Stellar Losses from MY own meager pocketbook in order to uphold my circle sister's good name.

I certainly hope that those penurious folk who drove Jane to such drastic action can live with the consequences of their deeds INCLUDING those in the fandom she loved so well, and which bankrupted her so thoroughly, both financially and emotionally.

I wish you good health and peace of mind.

/s/ M. J. Barrowman-Harper

[hand-written postscript]

- (1) Your letter threatening action "within 10 days" was undated.
- (2) Defamation of character can be a devastatingly expensive tort.

With people like you, I can almost understand what she did.

Ann was understandably upset by this ugly and enigmatic letter. A check from M. J. Barrowman-Harper was enclosed with the notation in the comment space "For Black-mail."

Taking this letter on the surface, it seems to say that Jani committed suicide, and yet it also seems to circle all around that statement without actually saying it, as if it meant for people to take that meaning. Does anyone have any information about Jani Hicks?? I am frankly quite puzzled by it all. Taking it on the surface, I am quite distressed by an apparent death, but on second thought I tend to think less charitable thoughts, like someone choose this rather bizarre way of skipping debts. The note is certainly hostile and threatening in itself and Ann points out that it is interesting that polite inquiries brought no response at all from the person above, and only a threat to turn Jani in for mail fraud, a federal offense, got a reply. Please, please--let me hear from anybody out there who has had a similar experience or who has some inside information on what has happened to Jani Hicks.

Open letter to everyone interested in or involved with D'ALLIANCE

JULY 14th, 1983

Dear friends, readers and contributors;

I regret to tell you that the zine, D'alliance, cannot and will not be printed.

As of this date, I have recieved 32 reservations since December of '81 and approximately 30 contributions for the zine. The contributions *all* are lovely and gratefully appreciated. The reservations are nowhere near enough to meet the printing estimates I have received. Furthermore, pre-publication costs have taken all moneys received to date, and I am, very regretfully, unable to return the reservation fees. If this seems out of line, please take the time to confer with anyone else you may know who has, successfully or not, made the attempt to get a first issue off the platform. If this seems unbelievable, it is the truth, nevertheless.

It was never my intention to attempt to cover the costs for printing this zine out of my own income. I am in considerably strained finances at the present time and I hoped that the subscriber/reservers to D'alliance would present themselves in sufficient numbers to enable me to go to press this fall. That was already a years delay from the original pub date. To delay any further would be strikingly unfair to everyone.

I am asking all reserver/subscribers to be understanding of these matters, if you possibly can.

I am requesting all my friends, especially those who have become friends while working on D'alliance, who have contributed to the zine to be understanding enough to SASE me for the return of your ~~own~~ material. And please, keep in touch.

I don't intend to gafiate, retire or otherwise dissappear from fandom. I intend to continue writing, fannishly or otherwise and have been sometimes a fair hand at turning out a poem, so if anyone's interested in my work, let me know. I love fandom, despite some of the wrangles and hassles, and a whole lot of my friends for the past eight (?) Arrgh! years live there, so I've no intention of losing touch. I have simply come to the ~~conclusion~~ conclusion that this project cannot be completed, certainly not to my satisfaction, or that of the other fen involved.

Thanks and Brightest Blessibgs on ye,

Ronni Sacksteder

Ronni Sacksteder
~~PO BOX 5253~~ PO BOX 5253
Berkeley, CA 94705

Ronni Sacksteder
Jeani Hicks
PO 27484
Concord, CA
94527

DR. SUSAN J. BRIDGES
200 WEST 79TH STREET 14 H
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 12004

A PERSONAL STATEMENT

May 6, 1985

I have been reading zines for eight years and publishing the newsletter UNIVERSAL TRANSLATOR for four of those eight. In that time, I have ordered a lot of zines through the mail and I've waited a lot of years for some of them. It took Diane Steiner three years to get me my copy of SPOCK ENSLAVED. I am still waiting for my copy of SENSUOUS VULCAN. (For those of you who don't recognize the reference, Ms. Steiner was one of the prototypical editors who cashed checks and disappeared.) It took me three years plus to get a refund from Janice Sidwell Smith. There have been others. But for all the mitigated gall, I think that Ronni Sacksteder takes the cake.

This woman has been taking deposits for several years for a zine called D'ALLIANCE. During that time, she sent reassuring messages that, despite the delay, "it was coming." Now, in April of 1984, I find that it was cancelled in July of 1983. It was not cancelled with a timely public announcement in any news- or letterzine that I subscribe to. It was cancelled in an "open letter" published in another zine. Furthermore, it was cancelled with NO REFUNDS. Specifically, "pre-publication costs have taken all moneys received to date, and I am, very regretfully, unable to return the reservation fees. If this seems out of line, please take the time to confer with anyone else you may know who has, successfully or not, made the attempt to get a first issue off the platform. If this seems unbelievable, it is the truth, nevertheless. It was never my intention to attempt to cover the costs for printing this zine out of my own income...."

AS a reader and as an editor, I object, adamantly and vociferously,

to Ms. Sacksteder's behavior. It is NOT acceptable, much less STANDARD, practice to refuse to refund money for a cancelled zine. I don't understand how a few hundred flyers could cost \$80 (\$2.50 deposit x 32 reservations), and I don't accept the validity of any other type of "pre-publication cost." Publishing a zine is a risky business. It takes time to break even, and during that time, the editor is at risk financially. If you don't intend to absorb initial costs out of your own pocket, then DON'T START a zine.

According to her letter, Ms. Sacksteder does not intend "to gaffiate, retire or otherwise dissapear (sic) from fandom" and offers her writing and poetry to anyone who is interested in publishing her work. I, for one, would like it clearly understood that I resent her belief that her behavior is acceptable. I do not find it to be so. Theft and fraud are damaging to all societies; they are especially destructive in a society where so many members must participate at a distance from each other that trust is an, if not THE, essential social glue. Editors who betray the trust that readers place in them as blatantly as Ms. Sacksteder has done, should have no reasonable expectation of continued welcome in fandom.

Susan J. Bridges,
editor, Universal Translator

Southern Enclave

First Class

Cheree Cargill
457 Meadowhill Dr.
Garland, Texas 75043

Your Subscription Expires With Issue _____